Hafa Adai!
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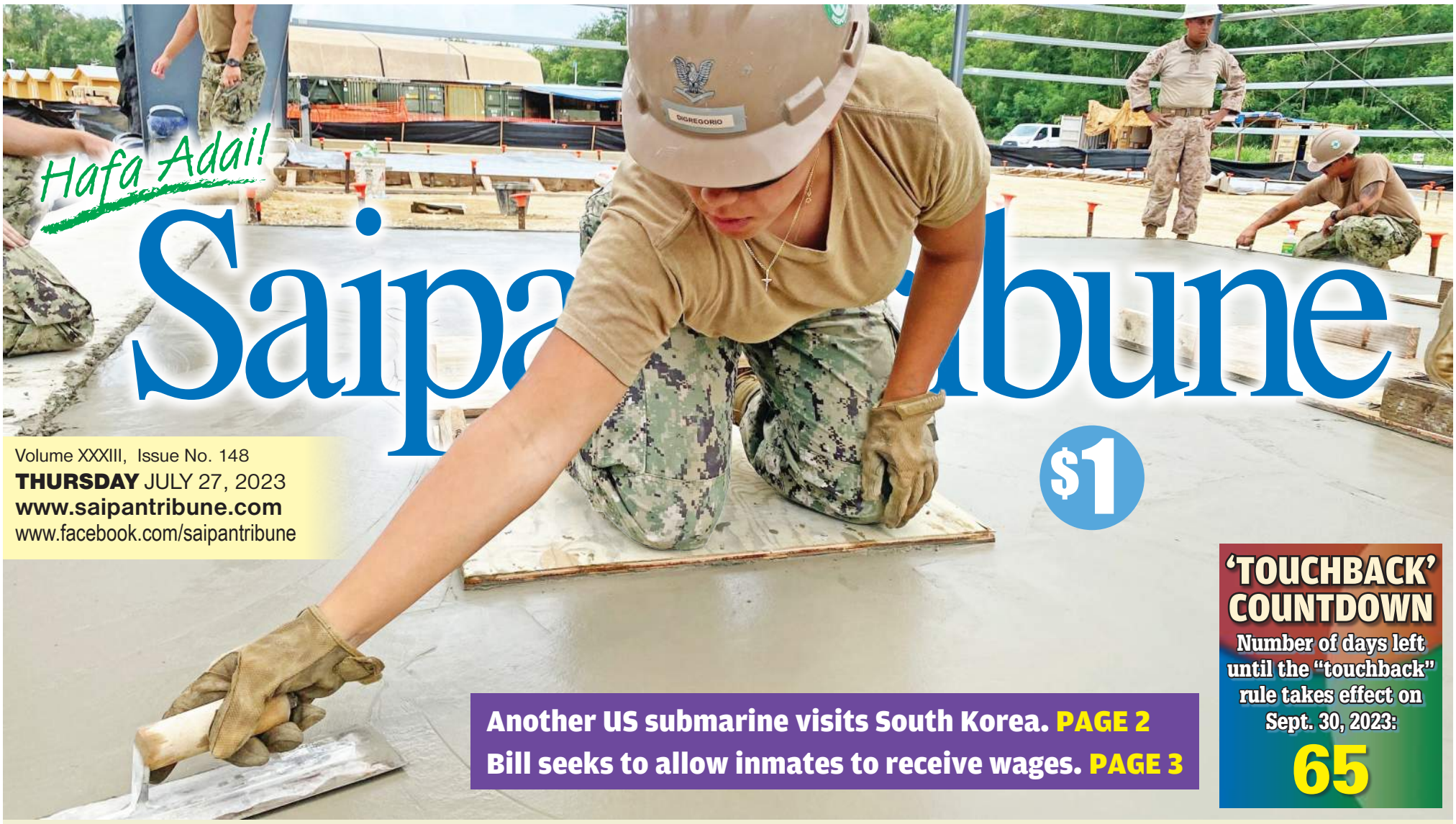

Another US submarine visits South Korea. PAGE 2
Bill seeks to allow inmates to receive wages. PAGE 3

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
65

CONCRETE POUR
U.S. NAVY/BUILDER 3RD CLASS ANDRES LUZ
Builder 3rd Class Gianna DiGregorio, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3, smooths a concrete pad for a camp facility maintenance project on Tinian. NMCB-3 is forward deployed throughout the Indo-Pacific region and U.S. territories to support and maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific. As the stand-in, crisis response, naval engineering force, NMCB-3 maintains a ready posture to deliver in-theater expeditionary logistics via expeditionary shore infrastructure, forward damage repair, and mobile construction.

Ruwaath found not guilty

LEIGH GASES
Venitus "Vince" Ruwaath, center, is seen walking out of Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan's courtroom with his wife after a six-person jury found him not guilty sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree after just two hours of deliberation in Superior Court yesterday afternoon.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After just two hours of deliberation in Superior Court yesterday afternoon, a six-person jury has found Venitus "Vince" Ruwaath not guilty of the charge of sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree.

See RUWAATH on Page 4

PALACIOS TO NORITA:
'Collect outstanding $121.4M'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Palacios

Norita

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has instructed Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita to figure out how to collect some of the $121.4 million in total outstanding collectibles from account receivables the government has amassed in the last 10 years.

If Norita needs more people to help with the collection, then they will have to assign two to three staff from within the government

See COLLECT on Page 4

Fuel prices up another 10 cents

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In a break with what has become longstanding practice, Shell Marianas took the lead yesterday with a price increase that saw its fuel prices go up by 10 cents, just five

See FUEL on Page 4

Saipan Awaodori Team returns to Japan

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Saipan Awaodori Team's Marcela Heben, Jeafanie Tibong, and Leon Wabol are shown dancing at a street performance in Shirogane.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Saipan Awaodori Team made a long-awaited return to Japan when six members, accompanied by the traditional Japanese musical and dance troupe founder Misaka Kamata, left Saipan for Japan last July 11.

See SAIPAN on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
UPS has reached a tentative contract with its 340,000-person union, potentially averting a strike.
PAGE 11

ASIA
The Taliban said all beauty salons in Afghanistan must now close as a one-month deadline.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
One of the most important triumphs in the moviegoing monsoon of "Barbenheimer" was originality.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

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Local

IN WAKE OF N.H KOREA LAUNCHES, THREATS

Another US submarine visits South Korea

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

AMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea— A U.S. Navy fast-attack submarine arrived at South Korea's southern island of Jeju on Monday, nearly a week after another U.S. submarine sailed into the country in response to North Korea's ballistic missile tests.

The USS *Annapolis*, a Los Angeles-class submarine, sailed into South Korea's Jeju Naval Base to replenish its ordnance, South Korean navy spokesman Jang Do-young told reporters Monday during a Ministry of National Defense briefing in Seoul.

The *Annapolis* is the third U.S. submarine reported to have visited the country this year, behind two larger, Ohio-class boats.

The USS Kentucky, a ballistic-missile submarine capable of carrying nuclear weapons, arrived July 18, and the USS Michigan, a guided-missile submarine, arrived June 16. Both submarines docked at Busan, the largest port in South Korea.

The *Annapolis* is one of 28 Los Angeles-class submarines in active service and is crewed by 143 sailors, according to the Navy's website. It was commissioned in 1992 and is homeported at Naval Base Guam.

The boat is equipped with 12 vertical launch system tubes that fire Tomahawk cruise missiles and four tubes that fire MK-48 torpedoes, according to the Navy. It last visited South Korea in September for an anti-submarine drill with South Korean and Japanese warships, the first such drill since 2017.

The *Kentucky* sailed into South Korea's Naval Fleet Headquarters on July 18 for a four-day stay to signal Washington's commitment to defend Seoul from Pyongyang's threats, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said in a speech at the headquarters Wednesday.

Yoon and President Joe Biden agreed in April to dispatch a U.S. ballistic-missile submarine as part of an effort to "further enhance the regular visibility of strategic assets to the Korean Peninsula" due to North Korea's provocations, according to their joint statement at the time.

North Korea has fired 17 ballistic missiles in 12 separate days of testing so far this year, including a solid-fueled Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile on Wednesday. North Korea also fired cruise missiles on Saturday; the South Korean National Defense Ministry did not disclose how many were launched.

North Korean Defense Minister Kang Sun-nam said the Kentucky's visit to Busan could meet the conditions set by Pyongyang for a preemptive nuclear strike, according to his statement released by the state-run Korean Central News Agency on Thursday.

AIR DROP EXERCISE
Royal Australian Air Force Corporal Charlotte Roe, a C-17 Globemaster III loadmaster assigned to No. 36 Squadron RAAF at Base Amberley, Australia, watches the engine start on an RAAF C-17 during Exercise Mobility Guardian 23 at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, last July 12, 2023. The RAAF C-17 later over the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands during Exercise Mobility Guardian 23. The multilateral exercise involved joint foreign partners showcasinge coalition ability in the Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.
U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. SEAN CARNES

Public warned against sailing in small craft

A small craft advisory remains in effect until 6pm today, Friday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center's State Warning Point, southeast winds of 15 to 25 knots, with gusts of up to 30 knots and seas of up to 8 to 11 feet are present in Guam and Rota coastal waters until 6pm today. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

A tropical disturbance in western Micronesia will drift to the northwest over the coming days, likely passing in between Yap and Guam. The disturbance is expected to bring hazardous winds and seas for Guam and Rota coastal waters.

All experienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, are advised to avoid boating in these conditions. ***(PR)***

Owning a business, while working full time: NMC graduate does it all

NMC

Northern Marianas College graduate Laarni Zapanta continues to make an impact in both her professional career as a manager and her entrepreneurial endeavor as a salon owner.

While it is not uncommon for Northern Marianas College graduates to wear many hats, there's one graduate who stands out as an extraordinary example of resilience and determination.

Laarni Zapanta, who graduated with a bachelor's degree from NMC's School of Business in 2020, is the Customer Operations manager at IT&E and the owner of Namaste Salon and Spa. Zapanta, like many of her fellow graduates, learned the skills she needed to flourish from the college.

"My business degree from NMC gave me the courage to act on my dreams of becoming an entrepreneur and helped me advance in my career at IT&E," Zapanta said. "Shortly after receiving my degree, I was promoted to a managerial position at IT&E,"

"Afterwards, my friends and I decided to open…Namaste Salon and Spa in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. When everyone was afraid to take risks in opening a business, we decided to just jump and do it," Zapanta said. "I was able to apply in real life skills that I've learned from my business classes in NMC and to make one of my dreams become a reality."

According to Zapanta, her experience at the college has influenced her to tell her friends and family to earn a degree from NMC.

"I continue to promote starting education at NMC to my colleagues and friends because it is convenient and inexpensive," Zapanta said, "I was very grateful to be able to finish my education without any student debt and while I was working."

Zapanta tells everyone that getting an education is a ticket to career advancement and the knowledge gained gives a person the courage and confidence needed to achieve success.

"If I can do it, you can too!" Zapanta said.

Zapanta is currently working on a master's degree in management and leadership from Western Governors University. ***(NMC)***

Bill seeks to allow inmates to receive wages

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rep. Manny Gregory T. Castro (Ind-Saipan) has introduced a bill that seeks to authorize inmates in the Department of Corrections to be paid for work they perform while in prison.

Under Castro's House Bill 23-64, or the "Inmate Salary Act of 2023," inmates who do work while in prison are to be paid wages that shall not be less than $1 per hour.

The lawmaker stated in his legislation that one way to promote rehabilitation is to provide inmates with the opportunity to earn a wage for work they perform while imprisoned. He said this can help inmates develop work skills, learn financial responsibility, and build self-esteem.

Castro

Castro said such a policy could make a big difference in reducing recidivism and bringing down the incarceration rate.

Under the bill, the DOC shall establish a system for paying inmates for work they perform, subject to adequate funding. However, Castro's bill states that this is not intended to create any entitlement or right to work for a wage and salary.

The amount of wage paid to an inmate shall be based on the type of work performed, the skill level required, and the number of hours worked.

The DOC commissioner may withhold all or part of an inmate's wage to pay for the cost of room and board, restitution to victims of crime, fines or court costs, child support or alimony, and other expenses as authorized by the commissioner and agreed to by the inmate.

While some U.S. jurisdictions actually do not pay for inmate labor, the range for hourly rates that states authorize varies widely. Castro said some states authorize wages as low as 16 cents per hour, while others authorize as much as $2 an hour.

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EARN PACIFICPOINTS

Virtual hearing for Torres' case tomorrow afternoon

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Superior Court judge pro tem Arthur R. Barcinas, who is handling former governor Ralph DLG Torres' criminal case in Superior Court, has set a status conference in the case tomorrow, Friday, July 28, at 1pm.

Torres

The hearing, ordered yesterday, July 25, will take place virtually before Barcinas.

He has not issued a new trial schedule in the case yet.

Torres' trial was initially set for August 2022, but it was later pushed to sometime after November due to the gubernatorial election last year. The trial was then later rescheduled to Feb. 13, 2023, but was again rescheduled to June 5.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, following a pre-trial conference in the case last May 8, Barcinas issued an order vacating the June 5 trial date.

The parties involved in the case agreed that there are pending issues that need to be resolved prior to trial, including the Commonwealth government's objection to the appointment of Barcinas as judge pro tem and Torres' objection to special prosecutor James Kingman's ability to serve as counsel moving forward.

The prosecution opposes Barcinas' appointment because he also currently serves as justice pro tem in the Supreme Court appellate case *Ralph DLG Torres v. House Standing Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations* in which the former governor is the plaintiff-appellant.

The parties explained that the June 5 trial date was premature, considering the numerous pending issues.

Torres' case was initially filed on April 8, 2022, charging him with 12 counts of misconduct in public office, one count of theft, and one count of contempt. Torres has denied the charges.

SAIPAN

From page 1

Joining Kamata on this trip were Jeafanie Tibong, Marcela Heben, Coddie Forbes, Cassidy Wabol, Eljon Tibong, and Leon Wabol.

The six musicians and dancers joined up with the Tokyo Tensuiren group for Awaodori performances in different places in Japan and are expected to stay in the country until Aug. 30.

This marks the Saipan Awaodori Team's first trip to Japan since the COVID-19 pandemic as their last time to join their parent group for performances in the East Asian country was in 2019.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Saipan Awaodori Team poses with Tokyo Tensuiren group in Shirogane, Japan.

So far, the Saipan Awaodori Team has participated in the Shirogane Awaodori Festival last July 16 and at the Ujie Awaodori Festival last July 23.

Kamata said the members of the Saipan Awaodori Team have so far impressed everyone with their performances in Japan and are meshing well and developing lifelong bonds with their brother-and-sister dancers and musicians from the larger Tokyo Tensuiren group.

"Our Saipan kids, in spite of different traditions and culture, dance performances and drum beating, are very impressive [and garnered from] the Japanese audience and foreigners the most attention. They take much pride in this traditional dancing [and] feeling the energy of the place," she said.

The group's next performances with the Tokyo Tensuiren will be on July 29 at Kitamachi Awaodori Festival. That will be followed by the Higashi Rinkan Summer Wow Festival on Aug. 5 and 6.

The Saipan Awaodori Team will cap their performances in Japan with the Tokyo Tensuiren when they take part in the three-day Koenji Awaodori Festival—one of the biggest dance festivals in Tokyo—on Aug. 25, 26, and 27.

Kamata also took the opportunity to thank the office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) for extending financial support for their seven-week trip to Japan.

RUWAATH

From page 1

After hearing the verdict, Ruwaath exploded into tears as Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan, who presided over the case, thanked the jurors and informed Ruwaath he was free to go.

The alleged victim in the case herself burst into tears upon leaving the courtroom and almost took down the hand sanitizer dispenser next to the door. She was then hugged in a tight circle by her family members and supporters. After a few minutes, they then left the courthouse.

In an interview with reporters as he was leaving the courtroom, Chief Prosecutor Chester Hinds, who was accompanied by assistant attorney general Frances Demapa, said they will "continue to fight the good fight and be there for all victims" of sexual abuse.

"These types of cases are tough cases. There's a single witness and sexual abuse of a minor cases is something that our office is dedicated in prosecuting, regardless of how hard it is. Now, just because the jury might not have found enough evidence, that doesn't mean that the victim is not telling the truth. There just might not be enough evidence for the jury to feel comfortable to find him guilty," said Hinds.

As Hinds and Demapan left, Ruwaath exited the courtroom with arms around his pregnant wife and kissed her as they walked out. When asked if he wanted to say something for the record, he said, "I just want to go home."

After Ruwaath and his family left the courthouse, assistant public defender Emily Thomsen told the media, "The jury spoke and the justice system worked. I hope the entire family finds peace."

Before the verdict, Ruwaath's wife and Ruwaath himself testified in the morning.

Ruwaath was first questioned by Thomsen, who asked him if he ever touched the minor's breast—as the girl alleged—to which he responded, "No I did not." She briefly paused this line of questioning to allow Ruwaath to compose himself as he had started to cry. He described his relationship with the girl as good and that she used to stay over at their house on most weekends and he treated her like his own daughter. He said she used to call him "dad."

During cross-examination, Hinds asked a series of questions that were supposed to establish that the minor had no reason to get back at Ruwaath—whether he or the minor ever argued, whether he disciplined her, and whether she disrespected him (he replied "no" to these question)—and that she can't make be making the allegations up.

The electricity inside the courtroom got interrupted thrice during the proceedings.

In Hinds' closing statements, he told the jurors, "We presented a case to you with both logic and emotion—a case where you can feel the emotions of a 15-year-old [minor] and her mom… a case where you can follow the logic from detective Shannon Dela Cruz, from [the minor's] pediatrician and from her psychiatrist."

He added, "She was able to remember and describe what happened. She not only told you, she drew it. She was able to answer questions directly. She didn't look away. She wanted to answer these questions; you heard the defendant never argued or tried to discipline [her] and never disrespected him. There's no motive for her to make this up. Again, like I said, she has told the story many times, and it's been consistent. How do we know? Because her mom said the same story. Also, you've heard her tell everyone in this court that she knew the difference between the truth and a lie. And that she was telling the truth."

In Thomsen's closing statements, the minor, who was in the courtroom, tried to leave but was held back and told to remain calm by her family members and supporters.

Thomsen showed the jurors on a screen a timeline of events of the case. She said, "The story presented by the Commonwealth is simply improbable and unbelievable, yet they're asking you to believe it beyond a reasonable doubt."

Toward the end of her statement, she told the jury, "I hope you are willing to dig a little deeper and look at the whole picture. The Commonwealth wants to distract you [with] the oddities in the case and the lack of thorough investigation with the testimony of the psychiatrist…"

Thomsen pointed out that in June 2020, when the alleged incident happened, the minor's parents could not have been off island; the minor could not have stayed over because there was no room for her as Ruwaath's brother-in-law and his family lived with them; the desk Ruwaath built for the TV, which the minor said her cousins were watching at the time of the incident hadn't been built yet until October 2020; her cousins were watching TV on chairs directly in front of the TV and said that if Ruwaath had put his hands under the minor's shirt, it would have been a big risk.

"Even after this, [the minor] kept going back to stay with her aunt and uncle many times simply because she was close to her cousins. Now we've heard from Vince's wife that she never once saw [her niece] act uncomfortable around Vince. Instead, we heard that she calls him dad and she told them that she loved him on a regular basis. [The minor] tried tell us that she called Vince 'dad' to hide how comfortable she was around him. But that simply doesn't make sense. And finally, most importantly, Vince told you he treated [her] like his daughter, and he did not touch her breasts," Thomsen added.

After their statements, the jurors broke for lunch, then returned for jury instructions and deliberations.

The trial began on Monday with a jury selection and with Dela Cruz giving the first witness testimony. The trial resumed on Tuesday with more prosecution witnesses—the minor, her mother, her pediatrician, and her psychiatrist.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the alleged victim told authorities that the incident happened sometime in June 2020 at Ruwaath's residence as she was watching YouTube videos in bed. The victim was 11 or 12 years old at the time of the incident and that Ruwaath allegedly fondled her breast. Ruwaath has denied the allegation.

COLLECT

From page 1

to work with her on this, said Palacios in a news briefing last week.

Palacios said he does not have specific information about the $121.4 million outstanding collectibles, but he suspects that some of those are probably owed by companies that no longer exist.

"Why didn't we collect it back then? I'm not sure. But we just need to get into the details [about] them and see what is collectible," the governor said.

Norita disclosed the $121.4 million total outstanding collectibles during the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee's Fiscal Year 2024 budget hearing last July 14. It was learned then that, of that total amount, $30 million are in employee quarterly withholdings that were not remitted by government and private employers.

Norita said that Finance's Tax Collection Task Force has set an initial target of collecting on these outstanding receivables within 180 days and that even if they have only a 5% success rate, they would still realize at least $6.07 million in the next six months.

She said they want to go more than 5% and if they collect as much as 20%, that would translate to $24.2 million.

FUEL

From page 1

days since the last fuel price increase in the CNMI.

Shell Marianas' V-Power gas price rose from $5.269 per gallon to $5.369 per gallon and its diesel price rose from $5.539 to $5.639.

The CNMI's other fuel supplier, Mobil Oil Marianas, which usually raises its fuel prices first, is expected to follow suit today. The two companies typically mirror each other's price adjustments.

As of yesterday afternoon, customers were seen fueling up at Mobil gas stations, with lines of up to three cars per pump. A gas attendant at the Mobil Sadog Tasi station said they've been busy most of the day and that his partner in the cashier's booth has been swamped.

A 35-year-old motorist said he bought a full tank of gas yesterday and thinks prices will continue to increase in the next few months. He said it's "not good for my wallet" and that he will try to cut back on driving—if that's even possible.

The last fuel price increase was on July 20, with Mobil Oil Marianas breaking the over two-month streak of steady gas prices with a 15-cent increase.

Haaland highlights conservation investments in Palau

NGERULMUD, PALAU—Interior Secretary Deb Haaland has completed a visit to the Republic of Palau as part of her weeklong visit to the Pacific Islands, where she highlighted the United States' historic and longstanding relationship with Palau, one of three Freely Associated States in the Pacific whose relationship is underpinned by a Compact of Free Association.

Haaland, assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Carmen G. Cantor, and deputy assistant to the President and Asian American and Pacific Islander senior liaison Erika L. Moritsugu met with Palau President Surangel Whipps, Jr., and other Cabinet officials. They discussed the Biden-Harris administration's ongoing commitment to the island, including the importance of negotiations regarding the extension of economic assistance under the Compact. The group also discussed Palau's work related to the Economic Advisory Group, funded with support from the Department of the Interior to support economic, financial, and management reforms in Palau.

Haaland also announced $1,008,000 in Office of Insular Affairs Technical Assistance Program grant funds that will support several priority projects for Palau, including:

- $500,000 for the National Repository of Youth and Workforce Development project;
- $350,000 for the Cheberdil (Young Sprouts in Palauan) Belau Youth Center; and
- $158,000 to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for an assessment of the Palau Ngerimel Dam and Reservoir.

While in Palau, Haaland and the group visited the Coral Reef Research Foundation and the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon to experience firsthand how Palau is investing in unique opportunities for climate resilience and coastal development planning. They also toured Peleliu, the island where the Battle of Peleliu took place during World War II, to honor the Americans who served there. The island is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated a U.S. National Historic Landmark. ***(PR)***

Flood watch in effect on Rota

A flood watch remains in effect in Guam and Rota through Friday afternoon.

Based on information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center-State Warning Point, flash flooding caused by excessive rainfall continues to be possible through this Friday afternoon.

Excessive runoff may result in flooding of rivers, creeks, streams, and other low-lying and flood-prone locations. Flooding may occur in poor drainage and urban areas. Storm drains and ditches may become clogged with debris.

Widespread showers and thunderstorms are expected to continue into Friday. Heavy downpours are expected, which could lead to flash flooding.

Rota residents are advised to monitor later forecasts and be alert for possible flood warnings. ***(PR)***

NZ contributes $3.57M to IFAD to enhance Pacific resilience

The International Fund for Agricultural Development and the New Zealand government recently signed a NZ$5.75 million (USD 3.57 million) agreement to support Pacific communities to ensure sustainable access to water and healthy diets.

The Small Islands Food and Water Project will reach 50,000 people—or 17% of the population—in the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu.

Aotearoa New Zealand's support demonstrates its commitment to increasing the impact of its climate action, as highlighted in Tuia te Waka a Kiwa, its international climate finance strategy.

With a total investment of US$19.23 million, SIFWaP aims to strengthen the climate change resilience of small island communities in these countries by improving their food, nutrition and water security and livelihood opportunities. SIFWaP reinforces the strong partnership between IFAD and New Zealand in their efforts to help eradicate poverty and hunger in rural areas of the Small Island Developing States and build adaptation resilience, not only in the Pacific, but across the world. This investment is also a recognition of IFAD's role in international development as an effective organization that delivers results and improves food and income security, especially for poor rural people.

These countries are among the smallest and most isolated of the SIDS and are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts and natural disasters. High population densities combined with low agricultural productivity contributes to a precarious food and nutrition security situation across the region. As a result, the islands are heavily dependent on food imports and generally lack access to fresh, nutritious food.

At the same time, rising sea levels are leading to chronic coastal erosion and causing social and economic disruption. Extreme climactic events, such as droughts and hurricanes, are becoming more frequent, stressing the islands' already scarce natural resources, including water for consumption and agricultural production.

"These island states are among the first to be hit—and also the hardest—by crises such as the pandemic and disruptions in the global supply chain due to conflict. They are also more exposed to deeper long-term consequences," said Donal Brown, IFAD associate vice president, Programme Management Department. "Rural people in remote islands need support to help them produce, consume, and market more local foods in environmentally sustainable ways. Climate change and vulnerability to natural disasters threatens the very existence of these extremely isolated communities. This contribution by New Zealand offers a vital opportunity for us to collectively examine the challenges facing by the SIDS, and work with those countries to identify new and innovative solutions to together make a meaningful difference."

SIFWaP will work with communities to implement a range of climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive measures. These will reflect each country's priorities and needs, but could include measures such as composting, using renewable energy for poultry incubators, driers and pumps, and reducing the dependence on rainwater for drinking and agriculture by installing sustainable water supply infrastructure. The project will also revive indigenous knowledge on local foods, supporting families to be better equipped to prepare, preserve and store healthy and nutritious foods.

SIFWaP is aligned with IFAD's SIDS strategy and will support the governments to nurture enabling policy environments to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy highlights the unique vulnerabilities and development challenges in SIDS because of their small size, remoteness, limited resource base and exposure to climate and natural disasters. In addition to the NZD 5.75 million (USD 3.57 million) contribution, the project will be co-financed by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (US$11.65 million), project participants' in-kind contributions (US$2.34 million) and the four SIFWaP countries (US$1.83 million). IFAD will supervise the project's implementation and will provide additional technical support and capacity building on project management fiduciary matters, procurement, audits and reporting.

Since the establishment of IFAD in 1977, New Zealand has contributed US$22.21 million to IFAD's work to transform rural economies and food systems by making them more inclusive, productive, resilient and sustainable. Previously New Zealand has also contributed US$0.79 million in supplementary funds to co-finance an IFAD-funded project on Inclusion of Family Farming in Value Chains Project in Paraguay. ***(IFAD)***

EARTHQUAKE BRIEFS

4.9-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 8:26am on July 26, 2023, a report of a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred in the Pagan region of the Northern Mariana Islands. There were no reports of injuries or damages and no tsunami warnings or advisories were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

5.5-magnitude quake in Guguan

An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.5 occurred about 10 miles west of Guguan in the Northern Mariana Islands at 8:35pm on Tuesday, July 25, 2023. Based on all available data, there was no tsunami threat to Guam, Rota, Tinian, or Saipan from this earthquake, but some areas may have experienced shaking. ***(PR)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
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Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairperson of the Board, is hereby giving notice that a Special Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 31, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  a. Call to Order
  b. Roll Call
  c. Adoption of Agenda
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. CDBG-DR PROGRAM UPDATES
  a. Housing Program (Homebuyer/New Construction and Rehabilitation/Reconstruction)
  b. Oleai Sewer Line Replacement Project
IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION
V. ADJOURNMENT

(Notes: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13 (a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/
Merced (Marcie) M. Tomokane
Chairperson of the Board

From lieutenant to captain

By STAFF SGT. KELLY WILLETT
807th Medical Command
(DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT)

Army Reserve 1st Lt. Lacy Elwood double-checked a text from her phone notifying her that she was promoted to the rank of captain during the Innovative Readiness Training mission in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands called CNMI Wellness last on July 14, 2023.

"The feeling was surreal that I get to be out on a real-world mission while also advancing in my field back home," said Elwood.

Elwood recently participated in Resolute Sentinel, an international humanitarian mission in Latin America and the Caribbean. After two weeks in Guatemala, she asked herself, "How can I get on another one of these missions immediately?"

When the opportunity came for the IRT CNMI Wellness mission, Elwood jumped to volunteer again. As this is Elwood's first IRT mission, she felt lucky to be selected for the team providing services to the island of Tinian.

Doing a military mission in a school thousands of miles away from home while simultaneously helping the community of Tinian was fulfilling for Elwood.

"When you get these members together that have a servant's heart in both their civilian and military lives, you get a group that wants to grind to provide the best care possible for the communities they serve," said Elwood.

U.S. AIR FORCE/STAFF SGT. KELLY WILLETT

Army Reserve 1st Lt. Lacy Elwood was one of those involved in the Innovative Readiness Training in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands last July 14, 2023.

Elwood started her military career as an enlisted soldier, joining the Army at 20 years old as a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear specialist. She made the decision to join while seeking both direction in her life and a way to pay for nursing school.

After obtaining her nursing degree, Elwood realized, "I love nursing, and I love the Army. Why not join them together and do what I love times two."

Elwood currently serves with the 141st Medical Detachment out of Springfield, Mo.

IRT medical missions not only prepare military members for real-world experiences in deployed settings but also impact the local community in immeasurable ways. The IRT CNMI Wellness mission was predominately made up of Army Reserve and Air National Guard military members.

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Job Duties
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- Prepare graphic designs from general instruction and preliminary sketches, diagrams, or schematics;
- Prepare drawings from conceptual plan to Development Plan and construction record drawings;
- Make sure of CAD to prepare engineering drawings consisting of plans, sections, and details from rough sketches to established standards and procedures;
- Ensure compliance with required design safety factors, tolerances, and specifications.

Requirements
- Associate's Degree or Equivalent; Major(s) and/or field(s) of study in Architecture/Architectural Studies/Eco-Friendly Architecture.
- At least 24 months of work experience as a graphic designer is required;

Please send a resume and transcript to
BE TO CORPORATION, Attn: Da Young CHUNG at P.O. Box 7670 SVRB, Saipan, MP 96950.

UN, Micronesian gov'ts rev up SDGs via digital transformation

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The governments of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati have joined forces with the United Nations to launch the Joint Programme on accelerating Sustainable Development Goals achievement through digital transformation.

POHNPEI, Micronesia— The governments of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati have joined forces with the United Nations to announce the launch of a ground-breaking Joint Programme on accelerating Sustainable Development Goals achievement through digital transformation to strengthen community resilience in Micronesia.

Small Island Developing State, or SIDS, in the Pacific face numerous unique challenges that impact inclusive socio-economic development in a rapidly changing global physical and technical landscape. Geographical isolation, limited resources, dis-economies of scale, and heightened vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change significantly impact their growth opportunities.

The Joint Programme provides a platform for synergies and collaborative action through pooling resources, expertise, and networks to explore solutions aimed at providing better access to digital services, fostering innovative and inclusive environments, spurring economic activities, and strengthening climate change resilience to improve the overall quality of life in the region. This is a unique opportunity for governments, the private sector, civil society partners, and UN organisations in the region.

"Through this Joint Programme, we are not only leveraging the potential of technology but also nurturing resilience and empowering communities in the Pacific," said Jaap van Hierden, UN resident coordinator Micronesia. "Together, we can harness the transformative power of technology, collaboration, and innovation to break barriers, create opportunities, bridge divides, and build a future where no one is left behind."

The Digitalization Programme brings together seven participating UN organizations led by ITU, including FAO, ILO, UNOPS, UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNODC, under the overall leadership of the UN resident coordinator Multi-Country Office Micronesia. Financed through a US$3.8-million grant provided by the UN Joint SDG Fund, the Joint Programme supports digital transformation initiatives, solutions, and policy framework developments to digitally empower SIDS across the Pacific.

Currently, the participating countries of FSM, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati are actively engaged in the development of a comprehensive digital transformation strategy. In-country consultations are being conducted to ensure the strategy's ownership and sustainability. This strategy will serve as a vital connector and launch pad for formulating or enhancing sector-specific digital transformation action plans, such as those focused on e-health, e-agriculture, and e-commerce. By adopting a holistic "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approach, these countries aim to address key barriers to digital transformation collectively and guide their governments in leveraging digital technologies for inclusive socio-economic development and improved resilience in the face of unique challenges posed by their geographical locations and vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

To realize this vision, the Digitalization Programme will identify one pilot innovative island/district across five participating countries in the region. These selected pilot locations will serve as models for leveraging digitalization to enhance service delivery and drive overall development. The UN agencies will collectively implement digital strategies and capacity-building interventions and facilitate policy reforms to sustain and institutionalize digital initiatives. This will lay the foundation for long-term impact and progress that will pave the way to accelerating the SDGs toward an inclusive, sustainable, and progressive future.

The UN Joint SDG Fund is funded through contributions from 14 development partners, including the European Union, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Luxemburg, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. Their contribution plays a crucial role in advancing the goals of the Joint Programme and promoting sustainable development in the Pacific region. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Make it three for three, Donald: Trump says he's going to be indicted again; good

Donald Trump accurately predicted his first and second arrests and indictments for porn-star payoffs in Manhattan and secret document stealing in Florida. Let's hope he's also correct about his forecast concerning his biggest offense of all: trying to overthrow the government of the United States and

The whole world watched this crime happen. It was a conspiracy meant to benefit one man.

seize power with his Jan. 6 putsch.

Unable to resist blabbing to the world (and absolutely frustrating any lawyers still willing to have him as a client) Trump took to his Truth Social megaphone to say that Special Counsel Jack Smith sent him a letter Sunday informing the former president that he is a target for prosecution. That means he's getting arrested and charged.

The venue for the grand jury and the trial will be at the scene of the crime in downtown Washington, not far at all from the White House where Trump plotted for weeks and the Ellipse where he gave his mob its literal marching orders before they headed down Pennsylvania Ave. The federal courthouse where Trump will be arraigned and later face justice before a jury of his peers is also just a block from the Capitol complex, where his frenzied goons assaulted police that cold winter afternoon, killing some.

The evidence, collected by the Jan. 6 committee and now Smith, is overwhelming. The whole world watched this crime happen. It was a conspiracy meant to benefit one man. He was president at the time and was impeached for it. Now, as a citizen, he will be tried for it.

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'Girl dinner' is much more than a social media fad

By LETICIA MIRANDA
Bloomberg Opinion

Leticia Miranda is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering consumer goods and the retail industry. She was previously a business reporter at NBC News and a retail reporter at* BuzzFeed News.

TikTok has been taken over by "girl dinner," which is a cultural reference favoring no-fuss snack plates instead of a full meal. But girl dinner is more than just a social media trend; it reflects a larger shift in our eating habits that began before the pandemic. We're simply snacking more these days. In a country known for oversized entrées, this change represents an inflection point for food companies that could be as significant as the impact television had on our eating habits. It's hard to imagine American food culture without a TV dinner. Soon, it may hard to imagine food culture without the girl dinner snack plate—and food companies are taking notice.

The US snack market is booming. Between 2018 and 2022, sales of salty snacks grew by 42% to $35.3 billion, according to Circana, a Chicago-based market research firm. And those sodium-stuffed treats, such as pretzels, chips and popcorn, were the best-selling specialty foods last year for the first time, Axios reports, citing the Specialty Foods Association. Overall, about 27% of consumers said they were snacking more last year than the year before, according to Kelsey Olsen, a US food and drinks analyst with the market intelligence firm Mintel. Some 20% of female consumers reported that they were replacing more meals with salty snacks and 45% said they were snacking more in general.

Snacking or choosing smaller meals throughout the day may be a reflection of how consumers are managing their budgets. As Sean Connolly, the chief executive of Conagra Brands Inc., whose dozens of brands range from Healthy Choice foods and Slim Jim meat sticks to BOOMCHICKAPOP popcorn, said on the company's recent earnings call, people may not be buying as much food, but they "aren't eating less." Connolly should know, as Conagra's snacks and grocery business helped keep the company's latest earnings report from becoming a disaster. Although Conagra's frozen and refrigerated food volumes fell 11% from a year earlier, snacks only declined by 5%.

Sure, food prices have soared during this era of inflation, but don't assume that consumers are drawn to snacks just for their relatively lower costs and convenience. The pandemic ignited fresh interest in healthy eating. Two snack products that saw significant growth in both dollar and unit volumes in 2022 were Simply Good Foods Co.'s Quest Protein Chips, a crunchy high-protein snack, and Hershey Co.'s Pirate's Booty, a cheesy puffed corn chip. Both snacks are either rich in nutrients or made with higher quality ingredients than conventional processed food.

Frozen dinners have yet to win over health-conscious consumers who are skeptical of processed foods that contain high levels of sodium. A plate of Stacy's Pita Chips, Applegate Farms sliced ham with some grapes from Kroger and cheese from Whole Foods appears to be a higher quality meal that one can assemble more conveniently than waiting 10 minutes for a high-sodium Marie Callender's pot pie to heat up in the microwave.

This all bodes well for savory and salty snack giants PepsiCo Inc. and Mondelez International Inc. as well as the Hershey Co., which is looking to expand in this area. The iconic confectionary maker has been on a salty snack binge, snapping up companies such as SkinnyPop, Dot's Pretzels and Pirate's Booty in recent years. The results of those acquisitions are promising. Hershey's North American salty snacks business grew 119.7% in the first quarter of 2023 from a year earlier, driven by higher prices and sales volume. The company expects its salty brands will achieve double-digit growth over the next few years and has been investing in its supply chain to meet growing demand. Hershey reports earnings next week.

Think of snack plates as the TV dinner of the TikTok generation. As for girl dinner, the fad challenges many of the assumptions about women and their family roles. After all, the use of the infantile word "girl" speaks to the reality that even adult women don't always "have it all together," which previous generations may have been hesitant to admit. In essence, the popularity of girl dinner reflects broader anxiety about what it means to be a woman in the post-pandemic era and a time when women's rights—and what defines a woman—are under attack. In this world, a plate of baby carrots, cheese, salami, hummus and pretzels is just fine for dinner. Food companies would be wise to fight for their place on that plate.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

How the government can solve America's obesity epidemic

By ROBERT PEARL
The Fulcrum

Robert Pearl is a clinical professor of plastic surgery at the Stanford University School of Medicine and is on the faculty of the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He is a former CEO of The Permanente Medical Group.

Dying younger. Living harder. Going broke. It is difficult to overstate the longitudinal effects of excess weight in America.

An estimated seven in 10 Americans are overweight or obese. The combination, according to the National Institutes of Health, results in an estimated 300,000 preventable deaths per year with extreme obesity lowering life expectancy by 14 years on average.

Added weight not only makes everyday life more difficult, but it also produces serious health consequences that include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders and cancer. In total, obesity costs an estimated $260 billion annually in inpatient and outpatient care.

Whether weight gain is caused primarily by genetics, societal influences or individual will, scientists aren't altogether sure. What's clear, however, is that most efforts to lose weight ultimately fail.

Ozempic, one of a new class of medications, has been shown in studies to spur significant weight loss. The others include Mounjaro, Rybelsus and Wegovy with several new (and convenient, pill-based) options in development.

Last year, more than 5 million Americans were prescribed one of these drugs for weight reduction.

The annual price of treatment ranges from $12,000 (Mounjaro) to upwards of $16,000 per year (Wegovy). As a result, most users are either wealthy or have generous health-insurance coverage.

But as more Americans seek these medications for moderate weight loss, not diabetes, insurers have started clamping down. They've issued threatening letters to doctors, warning they'll be referred to state regulatory boards for writing "off-label" prescriptions.

Ozempic and other medications that help with weight loss are part of an ongoing national debate in which two competing truths collide.

The first truth is that these drugs work, leading to significant and sustained weight reduction: 14 to 25 pounds per individual on average during the medication course. And while they're not a replacement for proper nutrition, exercise or healthier living, they do reduce the likelihood of heart attack, stroke and cancer.

Second, despite the medical opportunity at hand, making these drugs available to all 100 million obese American adults would prove cost prohibitive for businesses, private insurers and the government.

This means that the medications could drastically rollback the nation's $260 billion in obesity-related medical expenses each year, but prescribing them at today's prices would cost more than $1.5 trillion annually—increasing national health care expenditures by as much as 25%.

What's more, these medications are considered "forever drugs," requiring users to either maintain their dosage or regain most of the weight they lost.

Insurers are eager to draw a line between those seeking prescriptions for appearance's sake and those at heightened risk of disease or death. They're happy to cover the latter but, as with cosmetic surgery, insurers believe patients should foot the bill for the former.

Lost in this debate is an important question: Why not figure out how to make these lifesaving drugs broadly available and affordable?

With hundreds of thousands of obesity-related deaths each year, the magnitude of the problem qualifies as an "epidemic" and justifies forceful government intervention.

The current administration, with congressional approval, could initiate a nationwide campaign to fight obesity, similar to Operation Warp Speed. The program, with a $10 billion upfront investment, led to the speedy development of a safe and effective coronavirus vaccine. The government then was able to purchase more than 1 billion doses at one-third the cost of the vaccine's current list price.

Here's how the administration could replicate Operation Warp Speed to fight the obesity epidemic without breaking the bank.

The government would invest $4 billion up front—twice the average R&D cost to bring a new drug to market.

In return for funding and a 10-year contract, the first drugmaker to develop a safe and effective weight-loss drug would be required to sell that medication back to the government at $40 per dose (or $2,000 per patient/year), significantly below the retail price of Ozempic and similar drugs. The winning pharma company would benefit financially, earning up to $1.2 trillion in sales over the contract's lifetime without having to shoulder R&D costs.

With the new medication in hand, government-sponsored health programs, Medicaid and Medicare, would make it available to all obese enrollees (roughly 60 million people) for the next decade.

And by providing the drug to more than half of all obese adults, the government would reduce medical expenses by up to $130 billion annually or $1.3 trillion over 10 years, making the effort cost-neutral for American taxpayers.

The only financial risk to the government (outside of defending likely lawsuits) would be failing in its search for a new drug, thus wasting the $4 billion of taxpayer money. But that's a relatively insignificant sum compared to the potential health care benefits.

The role of government is to protect the health and financial well-being of the nation. Fulfilling that function led to a lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine. Doing so again is the best option our nation has to address America's growing obesity epidemic.

Medical debt is making Americans angry. Doctors and hospitals ignore this at their peril.

By NOAM N. LEVEY
KFF Health News

KFF Health News, formerly known as Kaiser Health News, is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs of KFF—the independent source for health policy research, polling and journalism.

For Emily Boller, it was a $5,000 hospital bill for a simple case of pink eye that took four years to pay off. For Mary Curley, it was the threatening collection letters from a lab that arrived more than 2½ years later, just as her husband lost his job and the family was fighting to save their home.

For Cory Day, it was a $1,000 fee he was charged at an emergency room outside Los Angeles, even though he only checked in and then left before being seen. "I feel like the hospital is a predator," Day said. "This is a place that's supposed to be looking after you."

The experience offered a stark lesson, he said: "Don't trust the system."

Reporting on medical debt over the past two years, I've spent hundreds of hours on the telephone, in the living rooms, and at the kitchen tables of patients like Day, Curley, and Boller. They are among the 100 million people in America whom we found have been driven into debt by medical and dental bills.

Some of my conversations with patients have been heartbreaking. Some enraging. Many have revealed a deep and disturbing disillusionment with our health care system.

Medical providers ignore this at their peril—and at a high risk to Americans' health.

Doctors and hospitals have long held an exalted position in American life, retaining public confidence even as Americans have steadily lost trust in other institutions such as government, law enforcement, and the media. Growing up, I shared this faith. My father was a physician who never hesitated to get up in the middle of the night and drive to the hospital to operate on a sick child in his care.

But as a journalist covering health care in America over the past 15 years, I've seen patients' faith shaken. They're tired of shocking medical bills they didn't expect and can't afford. And they're disgusted by the collection notices, the threatening phone calls, and the appointments they can't get because they owe money.

Many Americans say they simply no longer trust their medical providers. This is borne out by polling we did with our colleagues at KFF as part of our investigation of medical debt. Just 15% of people with health care debt said they have a lot of trust that providers have patients' best interests in mind. That's about half the rate among people without such debt.

Many caring people who work in health care understand this. I've met countless compassionate physicians, nurses, and others who see firsthand the toll that debt is taking on their patients.

But I've seen a lot more denial and finger-pointing by health care leaders. Hospitals and doctors blame the government for underpaying them and blame insurers for selling plans with unaffordable deductibles. Insurers blame providers for obscene prices. Everyone blames drug companies.

The upshot is that each of these medical industries hunkers down and, pleading its own suffering, looks out for its own interests. They rarely talk seriously about what they could do to relieve the financial burdens they create that drive tens of millions of Americans into debt.

And so, the suffering of patients deepens.

In our project on medical debt with NPR, we documented cancer patients forced to hold off debt collectors while fighting off nausea and other toxic side effects of chemotherapy; older workers whose retirement savings were obliterated; 30-somethings unable to buy a home because their credit was ruined by health care debt; new mothers forced to take on extra work; parents unable to buy Christmas gifts for their children; and seniors who cut back on food because of medical debt.

That our health care system would do this to people might be reason enough for hospital executives, insurance CEOs, and senior physicians to stop the blame game and look in the mirror.

If nothing else, this should be a flashing red light: the simmering resentment of growing numbers of patients who feel victimized by this system.

We got a hint of the dangers of this during the pandemic, as Americans who distrusted the medical system proved easy prey for misinformation about vaccines and other public health measures, with sometimes fatal consequences.

Other systemic risks are lurking. I was once a political reporter. I covered mayors and state legislatures and, ultimately, Congress. I saw up close what an erosion of trust can do to a system, and how much more difficult it becomes to get things done when the public loses faith in its institutions.

And as the political turmoil of recent years shows, public anger and disillusionment can produce unpredictable, even dangerous results.

Health care leaders—and physician leaders in particular—could alleviate patients' financial suffering.

Physician groups and hospital systems, many of which are led by doctors, could look more closely at the bills they send patients and the collection tactics they use. Health insurers, whose leadership ranks also often include physicians, could reconsider the high-deductible plans they sell and ask whether they truly protect their customers. And physicians everywhere could speak up about the financial travails of patients in their care.

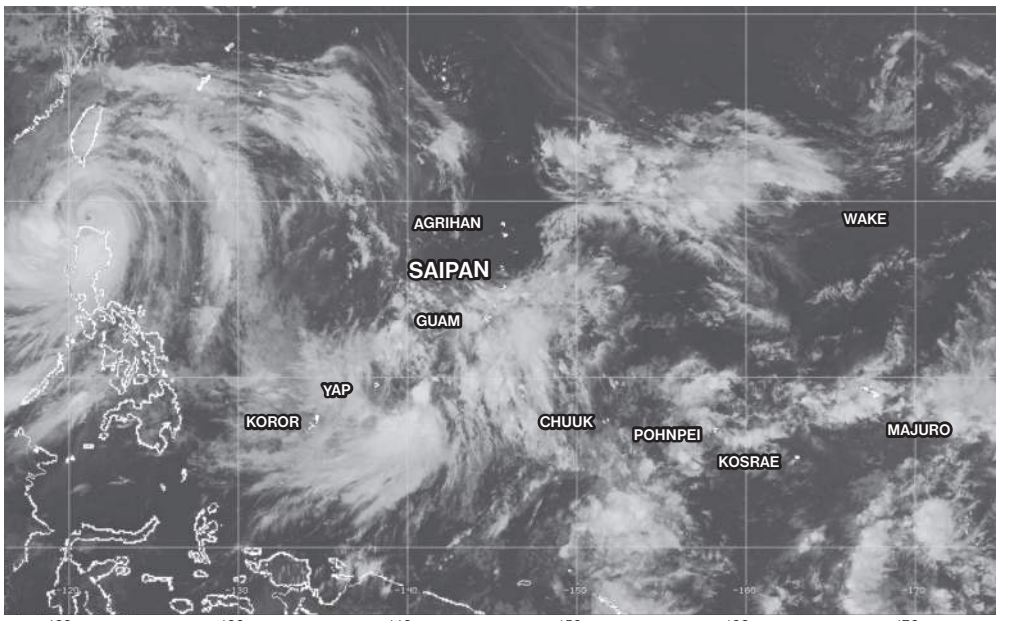
Absent action, patients' trust is sure to erode further. And without the trust of the people it serves, this American health care system cannot long endure.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy	A 50 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy	A 50 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
84° 78°	84° 79°	84° 79°	84° 80°	85° 80°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 9:06 AM, WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Cloudy skies and numerous showers are in southern and western Guam waters and outside of Marianas waters to the southeast but within radar range. Ipan buoy shows combined seas are near 6 to 7 feet, and altimetry shows 5 to 7 feet with peaks near 9 feet. KBDI has dropped a bit to 281, which is now in the low category.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	87° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	88° / 76°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	88° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Friday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Saturday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Sunday	5:58 AM	6:48 PM
Monday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	12:16 AM	1:22 PM
Friday	-	12:59 AM	2:20 PM
Saturday	-	1:49 AM	3:22 PM
Sunday	-	2:45 AM	4:27 PM
Monday	-	3:49 AM	5:32 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	57° / 46°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	99° / 81°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	88° / 82°
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	88° / 78°
London	Mostly Sunny	91° / 73°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	88° / 71°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	59° / 48°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	87° / 79°
New York	Showers	76° / 68°
Osaka	Thunderstorms	88° / 77°
Paris	Sunny	95° / 73°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	82° / 73°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	97° / 73°
Salem	Thunderstorms	80° / 67°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	65° / 54°
Seoul	Rain	82° / 75°
Tokyo	Thunderstorms	84° / 73°
Washington, DC	Showers	77° / 68°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:25 AM	High Tide	1.95
8:51 AM	Low Tide	0.46
3:43 PM	High Tide	1.59
8:21 PM	Low Tide	1.30

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 19, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1, 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7 via ICN
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3467	3:00AM	7:10AM	Daily up to July 20
TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
TW9308	4:45AM	8:45AM	1, 5 July 17 to Aug 18
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7 from July 21

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1, 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA189	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA192	11:50PM	5:35AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3468	8:20PM	1:50AM+1	Daily up to July 19
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	10:00PM	3:45AM+1	6, 4 July 23 to Aug 20
7C3405	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7 from July 20

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

UPS reaches tentative contract with unionized workers

NEW YORK (AP)—UPS has reached a tentative contract with its 340,000-person union, potentially averting a strike that threatened to disrupt package deliveries for millions of businesses and households nationwide.

The agreement was announced Tuesday, the first day that UPS and the Teamsters returned to the table after contentious negotiations broke down earlier this month.

Negotiators had already reached tentative agreements on several issues but continued to clash over pay for part-time workers, who make up more than half of the UPS employees represented by the union.

The Teamsters hailed the agreement as "historic."

Under the tentative agreement, which still needs union members' approval, full- and part-time union workers will get $2.75 more per hour in 2023, and $7.50 more by the end of the five-year contract. The agreement also includes a provision to increase starting pay for part-time workers — whom the union says are the most at risk of exploitation — from $16.20 per hour to $21 per hour. The average pay for part-timers had been $20.

Teamsters General President Sean M. O'Brien said in a statement that UPS put $30 billion more on the table due to the negotiations, saying the deal "sets a new standard in the labor movement."

The two sides had already tentatively agreed to make Martin Luther King Jr. Day a full holiday and to end forced overtime on drivers' days off. Tentative agreements on safety issues were also reached, including equipping more trucks with air conditioning.

UPS had also agreed to eliminate a lower-paid category of drivers who work shifts that include weekends, and convert them into regular full-time drivers. Under the agreement, the company will create 7,500 full-time jobs and fill 22,500 open positions, allowing more part-timers to transition to full-time.

"Together we reached a win-win-win agreement on the issues that are important to Teamsters leadership, our employees and to UPS and our customers," Carol Tomé, UPS CEO, said in a written statement.

Voting on the new contract begins Aug. 3 and concludes Aug. 22.

Industry groups, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, labor leaders and President Joe Biden applauded the deal.

The White House said Biden spoke via phone with Tomé and O'Brien and pointed to their agreement as evidence that collective bargaining works and offered his best wishes for a smooth ratification.

Union members, angered by a contract they say union leadership forced on them five years ago, argued that they have shouldered the more than 140% profit growth at UPS as the pandemic increased delivery demand. Unionized workers said they wanted to right what they saw as a bad contract.

Union leadership was upended two years ago with the election of O'Brien, a vocal critic of union president James Hoffa — son of the famed Teamsters firebrand — who signed off on that contract.

The 24 million packages UPS ships daily amount to about a quarter of all U.S. parcel volume, according to the global shipping and logistics firm Pitney Bowes. According to UPS, that's equivalent to about 6% of the nation's gross domestic product.

During the last breakdown in labor talks a quarter of a century ago, 185,000 UPS workers walked out for 15 days, crippling the company. A walkout this time would have had much further-reaching implications, with millions of Americans now accustomed to online shopping and speedy delivery.

The consulting firm Anderson Economic Group estimated a 10-day UPS strike could have cost the U.S. economy more than $7 billion and triggered "significant and lasting harm" to the business and workers.

Logistics experts warned that the other U.S. shipping companies do not have the combined capacity to handle all the packages that would come their way during a UPS work stoppage, and that prices of shipping and goods would inevitably increase. Meanwhile, customers who shop online could have faced higher shipping fees and longer waits.

In recent weeks, large and small businesses worked to create contingency plans in the event of a strike.

Joseph Debicella, a small business owner who sells bridesmaids' gifts online, said his company ships roughly 50% of its orders through UPS. He hasn't used FedEx, but he created an account with the company two weeks ago as chatter over a strike picked up. He was also hearing about the negotiations from his UPS driver, who told him his deliveries were getting lighter as the July 31 deadline for a new contract neared.

GRMC to host 8th Anniversary Health Fair this Saturday

DEDEDO, Guam—To conclude its anniversary celebration, Guam Regional Medical City is hosting its 8th Anniversary Health Fair on Saturday, July 29, 2023, from 10am to 3pm at the Micronesia Mall center court. The Health Fair will give the public opportunities to interact with representatives and specialists of GRMC's clinics, including its newest specialty, Rheumatology.

GRMC Clinics that will be present at the Health Fair include Cancer Care-Hematology/Oncology & Radiation Oncology, General Surgery, Infectious Disease, Neurology, Orthopedics, Podiatry, Pulmonology, Sports Medicine, Wound Care/Hyperbaric, One-Stop Center-Laboratory/Radiology, Patient Education, and Rehabilitation Services.

Representatives from GRMC's Referral Management will also be present to provide information on the referral process and schedule appointments for attendees who have a completed referral form on hand.

Additionally, some of GRMC's community partners will also partake in the Health Fair, including The Medical City Referral Office, MedPharm, Safety 1st Sytems, 3M Guam, MD Wholesale, and the Department of Public Health & Social Services (to provide application assistance for DPHSS programs).

The event is open to the public and will include demonstrations, games, giveaways, and prizes throughout the event. Upon registration, Health Fair attendees will be offered free blood pressure and BMI checks and glucose testing. ***(PR)***

BUSINESS BRIEFS

IMF global economic outlook sees slight growth, but inflation still a drag

WASHINGTON (AP)—Global growth will see a slight improvement compared to previous International Monetary Fund projections but "many challenges still cloud the horizon, and it is too early to celebrate," the organization's chief economist said Tuesday. IMF economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas gave his assessment as the organization projected that global economic growth will slow to an estimated 3% in 2023 and 2024, down from 3.5% in 2022. The latest projection reflects a 0.2% increase from the organization's April projections, when IMF leadership said the world economy was expected to grow less than 3% this year, increasing the risk of hunger and poverty globally. Despite the slight improvement, global growth "remains weak by historical standards," the IMF report states. But Gourinchas said in a Tuesday blog post that "in the near term, the signs of progress are undeniable." The IMF also predicts that global inflation is expected to fall from 8.7% in 2022 to 6.8% in 2023 and 5.2% in 2024. The organization's economists said that when the U.S. was able to fend off an unprecedented default by resolving the debt ceiling standoff earlier this summer, that in part "moderated adverse risks to the outlook." But it said the threat of higher inflation due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and extreme weather could lead central banks to hike interest rates or cause world leaders to enact more restrictive economic policies. In addition, China's slow recovery following the reopening of its economy after the pandemic "shows signs of losing steam" the IMF said. The U.S. economy has proved surprisingly resilient in the face of sharply higher borrowing costs. Employers are adding a strong 278,000 jobs a month so far this year; and at 3.6% in June, the unemployment rate is not far off a half-century low. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell and other officials will gather this week for their latest decision on interest rates, hoping to achieve a "soft landing," which is the goal of curbing inflation without causing a deep recession.

As Twitter fades to X, TikTok steps up with new text-based posts

The same day Elon Musk abruptly dropped Twitter's name and bird logo as part of its supposed transition to an "anything app" called X, TikTok impishly announced it will begin letting its users post—you guessed it—text-based messages. The popular Chinese-owned app, best known for lip-synced dances, often farcical "challenges" and other short videos, didn't offer much explanation for the new feature. It did note in a statement that the service is "expanding the boundaries of content creation" by showcasing the written creativity users have previously had to share via comments and video captions. TikTok announced the new feature late Monday. It wasn't clear to what extent users have embraced text posts in their first full day of availability. That's partly because searching on variations of the term "text post" largely turned up examples of a popular video genre—those focused on text message phone conversations, typically selected for humorous effect. There were also a few brave users offering video explanations on how to make text posts. ***(AP)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION (RFQ)
RFQ23-CHCC/DESIGN BUILD-IDIQ-0016

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR IDIQ (INDEFINITE DELIVERY-INDEFINITE QUANTITY) DESIGN/BUILD CONTRACTORS FOR COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, NMIAC Subchapter 140-80.1, CHCC hereby seeks the services of qualified Contractors to perform Design/Build Services for Projects located at the hospital in Saipan, Clinics in Tinian and Rota. The selected Contractors will be issued an Indefinite Delivery-Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Contract through **RFQ23-CHCC-DESIGN/BUILD-0016**. These services are in accordance with CHCC's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with these rules and regulations including but not limited to Sections **140-80.1-250 Pre-Qualification of Contractors and 140-80.1-305 Architect-Engineer Services**.

The Request for Proposals and Scope of Work is available on July 26th, 2023 online at www.chcc.health, navigate to the RFP tab on the left navigation bar, click on the URL for this **RFQ23-CHCC/DESIGN BUILD-IDIQ-016**.

A Pre-conference meeting will be held on August 2nd, 2023 at 9:00AM at the Preparedness Conference Room and general assembly will be at the CHCC/Public Health Entrance in front of the CHCC Gift Shop.

Inquiries regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing via email to Ms. Cora P. Ada, Director of Procurement at cora.ada@chcc.health no later than August 23rd, 2023.

Proposers shall submit proposals and all supporting documents to **Corazon P. Ada, Director, CHCC Division of Procurement and Supply, at cora.ada@chcc.health, no later than: 1000hrs (10am) Chamorro Standard Time on August 28th, 2023.**

/S/ DR. ESTHER L. MUNA
CHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Nation

McCarthy floats impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden

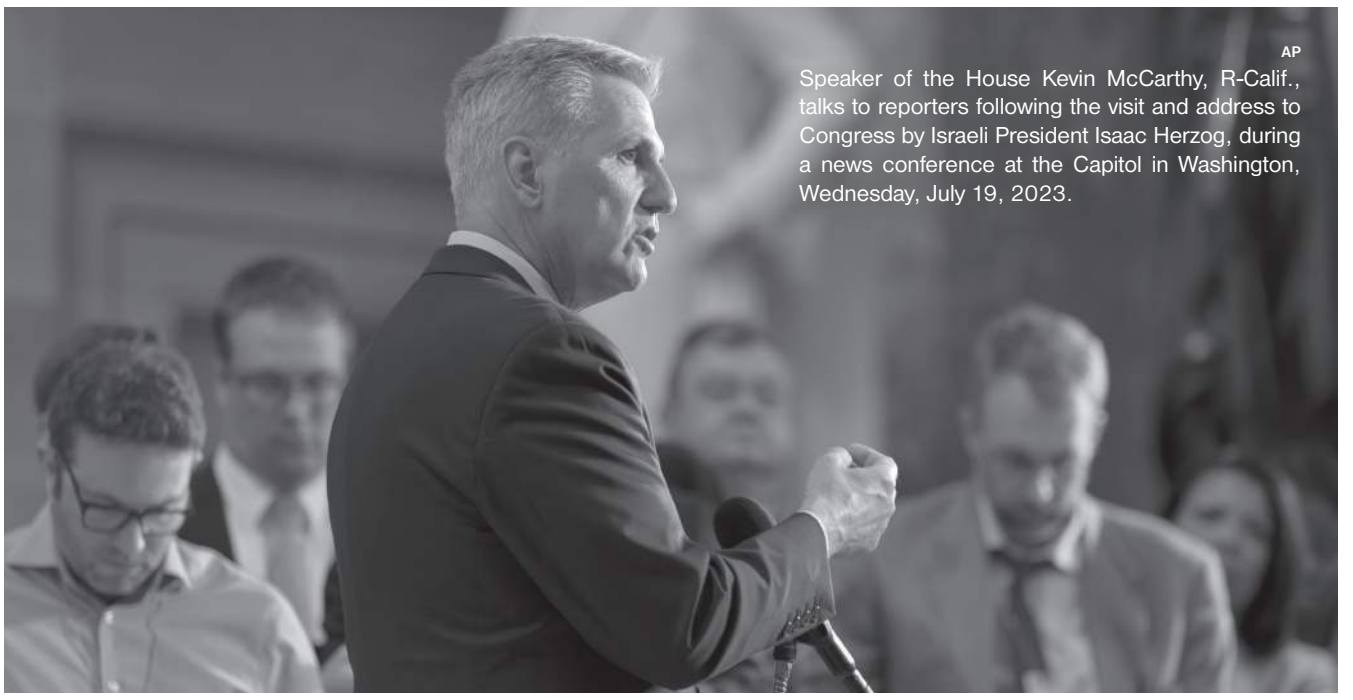
WASHINGTON (AP)—House Speaker Kevin McCarthy says Republican lawmakers may consider an impeachment inquiry of President Joe Biden over unproven claims of financial misconduct, responding to enormous GOP pressure to demonstrate support for Donald Trump ahead of the 2024 presidential election.

In remarks Tuesday at the Capitol, McCarthy said the questions House Republicans are raising about the Biden family finances need to be investigated. So far, he acknowledged, the House's probes have not proven any wrongdoing, but an impeachment inquiry "allows Congress to get the information to be able to know the truth."

An impeachment inquiry by the House would be a first step toward bringing articles of impeachment. Such a probe could be as lengthy or swift as the House determines, potentially stretching into campaign season.

"We will follow this to the end," he said, first floating the idea late Monday on Fox News.

It's the strongest comment yet from McCarthy on a potential Biden impeachment after the Republican leader sidelined earlier efforts by House conservatives to launch such an inquiry.



AP

Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., talks to reporters following the visit and address to Congress by Israeli President Isaac Herzog, during a news conference at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

With a slim majority in the House, McCarthy faces demands from Trump allies to elevate their priorities. Trump himself questioned at a Fox News town hall last week why Biden has not yet been impeached.

McCarthy has not yet endorsed Trump, who is the GOP's early frontrunner for president, or any other Republican candidates. He denied a report that he is considering House votes to expunge Trump's two impeachments as another way of showing support.

McCarthy on Tuesday gave no timeline for launching an impeachment inquiry into Biden and said he hadn't spoken to Trump about it. He declined to say if he would be making a presidential endorsement.

Asked if he felt pressure from Trump, he scoffed, "Do I look like I'm under pressure?"

White House spokesman Ian Sams said the House GOP's "eagerness to go after POTUS regardless of the truth is seemingly bottomless," using shorthand for the President of the United States.

"Instead of focusing on the real issues Americans want us to address like continuing to lower inflation or create jobs, this is what the House GOP wants to prioritize," Sams said on Twitter.

Republicans in Congress have ramped up investigations of Biden and his son Hunter Biden. House Republicans are digging into the family finances, particularly payments the younger Biden received from Burisma, a Ukrainian energy company that became tangled in the first impeachment of Trump.

Hunter Biden has since reached an agreement with prosecutors to plead guilty to misdemeanor charges of having failed to pay income taxes for several years. He is set to appear in court this week in that case.

But Republicans continue to pursue a largely debunked theory stemming from the first Trump impeachment about Burisma, with newer information. An unnamed confidential FBI informant claimed that Burisma company officials in 2015 and 2016 sought to pay the Bidens $5 million each in return for their help ousting a Ukrainian prosecutor who was purportedly investigating the company.

Judge blocks limits on asylum at US-Mexico border

WASHINGTON (AP)—A federal judge on Tuesday blocked a rule that allows immigration authorities to deny asylum to migrants who arrive in the U.S.-Mexico border without first applying online or seeking protection in a country they passed through. But the judge delayed his ruling from taking effect immediately to give President Joe Biden's administration time to appeal.

The order from U.S. District Judge Jon Tigar of the Northern District of California takes away a key enforcement tool set in place by the Biden administration as coronavirus-based restrictions on asylum expired in May. The new rule imposes severe limitations on migrants seeking asylum but includes room for exceptions and does not apply to children traveling alone.

"The Rule — which has been in effect for two months — cannot remain in place," Tigar wrote in an order that will not take effect for two weeks.

The Justice Department immediately appealed the order and asked for it to be put on hold while the case is heard. The agency said it's confident the rule is lawful.

Immigrant rights groups that sued over the rule applauded the judge's decision.

"The promise of America is to serve as a beacon of freedom and hope, and the administration can and should do better to fulfill this promise, rather than perpetuate cruel and ineffective policies that betray it," American Civil Liberties Union attorney Katrina Eiland, who argued the case, said in a statement.

The ACLU and other groups had argued the rule violates a U.S. law that protects the right to asylum regardless of how a person enters the country. The groups said it forces migrants to seek protection in countries that don't have the same robust asylum system and human rights protections as the United States. They also argued that the CBP One app the government wants migrants to use doesn't have enough appointments and isn't available in enough languages.

The administration had argued that protection systems in other countries that migrants travel through have improved. But Tigar said it's not feasible for some migrants to seek protection in a transit country and noted the violence that many face in Mexico in particular.

"While they wait for an adjudication, applicants for asylum must remain in Mexico, where migrants are generally at heightened risk of violence by both state and non-state actors," the judge, an appointee of President Barack Obama, wrote.

He also wrote that the rule is illegal because it presumes that people are ineligible for asylum if they enter the country between legal border crossings. But, Tigar wrote, Congress expressly said that should not affect whether someone is eligible for asylum.

The judge also rejected the administration's arguments that it had provided other avenues for people to come to the U.S. and that should be taken into account. The administration has pointed to a program that allows in as many as 30,000 migrants a month from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela if they have a sponsor and fly into the U.S. The judge noted that such pathways are not available to all migrants.

The Biden administration also argued that it was allowing potentially hundreds of thousands of people into the U.S. through the CBP One app. Migrants use the app to schedule an appointment to present themselves at the border to seek entry to the U.S. and request asylum.

Tigar noted that demand outstrips the 1,450 appointments currently available daily, leaving asylum seekers waiting in Mexico where they're at "serious risk of violence."

Gynecologist accused of sexually abusing over 200 patients sentenced to 20 years in prison

NEW YORK (AP)—A gynecologist who sexually abused vulnerable and trusting patients for over two decades at prestigious New York hospitals cried before he was sentenced Tuesday to 20 years in prison by a federal judge who called his crimes unprecedented.

The sentence for Robert Hadden, 64, was a measure of vindication for hundreds of former patients who accused the doctor of molesting them during examinations but saw an earlier prosecution end with a plea bargain that spared him from jail.

Given his chance to speak Tuesday, Hadden stood, his hands folded before him, as he said there was "much I'd like to say" but that he had been advised by lawyers to keep his statement brief.

"I'm very sorry for all the pain that I have caused," the sobbing Hadden said before dropping his head down as he sat again. He then took off his glasses and wiped tears from his eyes.

In statements over the past two days, Judge Richard M. Berman said the case was like none he'd seen before and involved "outrageous, horrific, beyond extraordinary, depraved sexual abuse." He noted that at least 245 women Hadden treated said they were abused.

The federal trial involved a smaller number of victims. Hadden was convicted of four counts of enticing women to cross state lines so he could sexually abuse them.

Nine victims testified at the trial, describing how Hadden molested them during gynecology treatments, starting in the late 1980s, at prominent hospitals, including Columbia University Irving Medical Center and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. The Associated Press does not typically name victims of sexual assault unless they come forward publicly.

Allegations of misconduct during examinations first surfaced in 2012. Hadden was indicted on state charges in 2014 as women — 19 and counting — kept coming forward. But in 2016, the office of the Manhattan district attorney at the time, Cyrus Vance Jr., allowed Hadden to plead guilty to two low-level felonies and a misdemeanor in a deal that required him to give up his medical license but didn't require jail time and kept him out of the state's sex offender registry.

Some of the women who had gone to state prosecutors were outraged, but their stories didn't start receiving public attention until the #MeToo movement began gaining steam in 2017.

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan got a grand jury indictment against Hadden in 2020, charges based on the fact that some patients at his New York offices had come into the city from other states. He was convicted in January.

Several dozen of Hadden's accusers were in the courtroom for his sentencing and some of them spoke outside the courthouse afterward, sharing their emotions with reporters and one another. Among them was Liz Hall, who said she found Hadden's expression of regret hollow.

"That was not an apology. He has shown zero remorse or empathy. I think he's incapable," she said.

Hall said she hoped the sentence would give other victims of sexual abuse courage to speak out.

Some of the women abused by Hadden later pushed for a change to New York law that made it easier for survivors of sexual abuse to sue over allegations normally barred by the statute of limitations. Hospitals where Hadden worked have agreed to pay more than $236 million to settle civil claims by more than 200 former patients.

According to trial testimony, Hadden benefited from the prestige of the hospitals where he worked as he groomed his patients in a private office decorated with pictures of his children as he conversed with them about their personal lives.

Asia

Taliban orders beauty salons to close down

ISLAMABAD (AP)—The Taliban announced Tuesday that all beauty salons in Afghanistan must now close as a one-month deadline ended, despite rare public opposition to the edict.

Sadiq Akif Mahjer, spokesman for the Taliban-run Virtue and Vice Ministry, did not say whether it would use force against salons that do not comply.

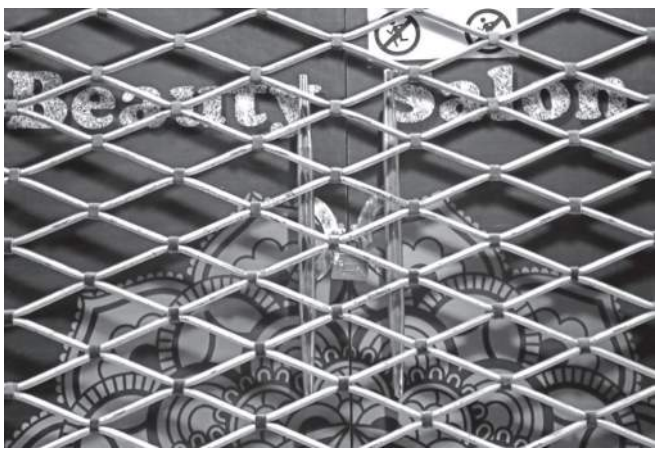
The ruling is the latest curb on the rights and freedoms of Afghan women and girls following edicts barring them from education, public spaces and most forms of employment.

The Taliban said it decided to ban beauty salons because they offered services forbidden by Islam and caused economic hardship for the families of grooms during wedding festivities.

Its earlier announcement of a one-month deadline for salons to wind down their businesses led to a rare public protest in which dozens of beauticians and makeup artists gathered in Kabul, the capital. Security forces used fire hoses and tasers and shot their guns into the air to break up the protest.

The ban also drew concern from international groups worried about its impact on female entrepreneurs.

The United Nations said it was engaged with Afghanistan authorities to get the prohibition reversed.



AP

A lock is seen on a beauty salon door after Taliban announced bans beauty salons in Afghanistan, is seen in the city of Kabul, Afghanistan, Tuesday, July 25, 2023.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "supports the efforts by the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which has called on the de facto authorities to halt the edict closing beauty salons.

"UNAMA has said that this restriction on women's rights will impact negatively on the economy and contradicts support for women's entrepreneurship, and we're seeking a reversal of the bans," U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said Monday.

The Taliban listed a series of services offered by beauty salons that it said violated Islam. They included eyebrow shaping, the use of other people's hair to augment a woman's natural hair and the application of makeup, which it said interferes with the ablutions required before offering prayers.

Grooms' families have been required by custom to pay for pre-wedding salon visits by brides and their close female relatives.

"This isn't about getting your hair and nails done. This is about 60,000 women losing their jobs. This is about women losing one of the only places they could go for community and support after the Taliban systematically destroyed the whole system put in place to respond to domestic violence," said Heather Barr, associate women's rights director for the New York-based group Human Rights Watch.

Typhoon blows off roofs, floods villages, displaces thousands in PH

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Typhoon Doksuri ripped tin roofs off of homes, flooded low-lying villages, knocked out power and displaced more than 12,000 people Wednesday as it smashed into a small island and lashed northern Philippine provinces with ferocious winds and rain, officials said.

There were no immediate reports of casualties after the typhoon slammed into Fuga island off Aparri town in Cagayan province, where more than 12,100 people were evacuated from high-risk coastal villages and schools, and workplaces were shut down as a precaution as Doksuri approached. Thousands of people in other northern provinces were also displaced by the typhoon, which has a 700-kilometer-wide (435-mile-wide) band of wind and rain.

Doksuri weakened slightly but remained dangerous and lethal with sustained winds of 175 kph (109 mph) and gusts of up to 240 kph (149 mph). It was blowing over the coastal waters of Fuga and Aparri town Wednesday morning, forecasters said.

"Our northern coastal towns are being battered," Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba told The Associated Press by telephone. "I'm receiving reports of tin roofs being blown away and flooding that could not drain out probably because of tidal surges coming in from the sea."

A damage assessment would be done after the typhoon passes, but Mamba said he feared there could be extensive damage to Cagayan valley's corn and rice farms, which have already been battered by a monthslong dry spell before Doksuri hit.

"Violent, life-threatening conditions are expected to continue" on Wednesday over northwestern Cagayan and the outlying Babuyan Islands as well as the northern mountainous regions of Apayao and Ilocos Norte provinces, according to an advisory from the country's weather bureau.

The typhoon has been enhancing seasonal monsoon rains in central and northern provinces, including in the densely populated capital region of metropolitan Manila. It was forecast to move away from the northern Philippines on Thursday and barrel northwestward toward the south of Taiwan and hit southeastern China later this week.

More than 4,600 inter-island ferry passengers and cargo truck drivers, along with nearly 100 passenger and cargo vessels and motor bancas, were stranded in several ports where a no-sail order was imposed, the Philippine coast guard said.

World

Lawmakers: UK should ban Wagner as terrorist group

LONDON (AP)—Britain has "underplayed and underestimated" the threat posed by the Russian Wagner mercenary group and should ban it as a terrorist organization, a powerful committee of U.K. lawmakers said Wednesday.

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee said the sanctions imposed by Britain on Wagner are "underwhelming" and U.K. authorities have done little to track the private army's activities beyond Ukraine, where it has fought as part of Russia's invading forces.

"There are serious national security threats to the U.K. and its allies of allowing the network to continue to thrive," said the committee, whose members come from both governing and opposition parties. It said Britain should "urgently proscribe the Wagner Network as a terrorist organization," something the Conservative government has so far been unwilling to do.

In a 78-page report, the committee said Wagner, which has close ties to the Russian state, operates like an "international criminal mafia, fueling corruption and plundering natural resources," especially in Africa, where it provides stability and protection for several authoritarian leaders.

"It is a significant failing to see the Wagner Network primarily through the prism of Europe, not least given its geographic spread, the impact of its activities on U.K. interests further abroad, and the fact that its wealth creation sits largely in Africa," the report said. It called it "deeply regrettable" that the U.K. paid little attention to Wagner before 2022, and "continues to give so little focus to countries beyond Ukraine."

The committee said with "high confidence" that Wagner had conducted military operations in at least seven countries since 2014: Ukraine, Syria, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Libya, Mozambique and Mali.

The lawmakers said Wagner also has business interests in those countries, such as lucrative gold mining operations in the Central African Republic and Sudan, where Wagner's gold-smuggling activities "enabled huge quantities of gold to bypass the state" and flow to Russia.

Wagner also has carried out non-military actions such as election interference in Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar and South Africa, and there is evidence of the group's involvement in other countries, the committee said.

The lawmakers urged the government to move "faster and harder" to sanction individuals and entities linked to Wagner, calling British sanctions "underwhelming in the extreme" compared to those imposed by the United States and the European Union.

The lawmakers urged Britain to boost aid funding to fragile and conflict-wracked countries to stop them from turning to Russia and Wagner for help. A decision to slash the U.K.'s international aid budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of gross national income should be reversed as soon as possible, they said.

Crash of plane fighting Greek island wildfire kills both pilots

RHODES, Greece (AP)—A Greek air force water-dropping plane crashed while diving into a wildfire in southern Greece on Tuesday, killing both pilots, as authorities battled blazes that have been raging for days across the country amid a return of heat wave temperatures.

Summer wildfires blamed on climate change have also struck other Mediterranean countries, leaving at least 34 people dead in Algeria in recent days and two people dead in southern Italy on Tuesday.

A state ERT TV video showed the bright yellow CL-215 aircraft releasing its load of water on the island of Evia before its wingtip apparently snagged in a tree branch. Moments later it disappeared into a deep fold in the ground from which a fireball erupted.

The air force said the pilots, aged 34 and 27, both died in the crash.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis cancelled a planned visit to Cyprus for Wednesday, and Greece's armed forces declared three days of mourning.

"They offered their lives to save lives," Mitsotakis said of the pilots. "They proved how hazardous their daily missions in extinguishing fires are ... In their memory, we continue the war against the destructive forces of nature."

A third successive heat wave in Greece pushed temperatures back above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) Tuesday amid a string of evacuations from fires that have raged for days, whipped on by strong winds.

It's still unclear how they started, although tinder-dry conditions and the summer heat mean the slightest spark can ignite a blaze that will spread fast if not quickly quenched. Several people have been arrested or fined across Greece in recent days for accidentally starting fires.

EU officials have blamed climate change for the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires across the European continent, noting that 2022 was the second-worst year for wildfire damage on record after 2017.

Greek police said a burned body believed to belong to a sheep farmer who had been missing since Sunday in southern Evia — a day before the fire broke out there — was found on Tuesday. It was unclear whether he had been killed by the fire or had died of other causes beforehand.

A fire service spokesman said the worst blazes on Tuesday were on the southeastern island of Rhodes and the northwestern island of Corfu — both popular tourist destinations. "On the other fronts, we have to deal with many cases of the fire flaring up again," Ioannis Artopios said.

Four villages on Rhodes were ordered evacuated on Tuesday as a fire burning for eight days continued to move inland, torching mountainous forest areas, including a part of a nature reserve.

Another five evacuations were ordered on Corfu, and one overnight on Evia.

On Rhodes, desperate residents, many with wet towels around their necks to stave off the scorching heat, used shovels to beat back flames approaching their homes, while firefighting planes and helicopters resumed water drops at first light.

Environment

Climate change leaves fingerprints on July heat waves around the globe, study says

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

The fingerprints of climate change are all over the intense heat waves gripping the globe this month, a new study finds. Researchers say the deadly hot spells in the American Southwest and Southern Europe could not have happened without the continuing buildup of warming gases in the air.

Thanks to years of research and more powerful computers, scientists can now determine almost in real-time whether climate change is contributing to the intensity of heat, storms, floods and drought—and by how much.

A generation ago, calculating such connections took up to a year, but researchers at World Weather Attribution made their conclusions about this summer's heat wave in less than a week. Their study is the first to look at three simultaneous heat waves on three different continents.

These unusually strong heat waves are becoming more common, Tuesday's study said. The same research found the increase in heat-trapping gases, largely from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas has made another heat wave—the one in China—50 times more likely.

A stagnant atmosphere, warmed by carbon dioxide and other gases, made the European heat wave 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit (2.5 degrees Celsius) hotter, the one in the United States and Mexico 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) warmer and the one in China 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius) toastier, the study found.

"Had there been no climate change, such an event would almost never have occurred," said Mariam Zachariah, a climate scientist at Imperial College of London and the lead author of the study. She called heat waves in Europe and North America "virtually impossible" without the increase in heat-trapping gases since the mid 1800s. Statistically, the one in China could have happened without global warming.

Relying on data gleaned from tree rings and other stand-ins for temperature records, several climate scientists say this month's heat is likely the hottest Earth has been in about 120,000 years, which would make it easily the hottest of human civilization.

The global average temperature has been hotter in 22 of the first 24 days of July than on any other single day recorded, according to calculations by the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer.

Since the advent of industrial-scale burning, the world has warmed 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit (1.2 degrees Celsius), so "the role of climate change is absolutely overwhelming," said Imperial College climate scientist Friederike Otto, who leads the team of volunteer international scientists at World Weather Attribution.

The intense heat waves that Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua and Coahuila are now roasting through are likely to happen about once every 15 years in the current climate, the study said.

But the climate is not stabilized, even at this level. If it warms a few more tenths of a degree, this month's heat will become even more common, Otto said.

Phoenix has had a record-shattering 25 straight days of temperatures at or above 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 degrees Celsius) and more than a week when the nighttime temperature never dropped below 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32.2 Celsius)

The heat in Spain, Italy, Greece and some Balkan states is likely to reoccur every decade in the current climate, the study said.

Because the weather attribution researchers started their analysis of three simultaneous heat waves on July 17, the results are not yet peer reviewed, which is the gold standard for science. But it used scientifically valid techniques, the team's research regularly gets published, and several outside experts told The Associated Press it makes sense.

The way scientists do these rapid analyses is by comparing observations of current weather in the three regions to repeated computer simulations of "a world that might have been without climate change," said study co-author Izidine Pinto, a climate scientist at the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute.

TO COUNTER RISING CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS

Asia-Pacific needs disaster warning systems—report

BANGKOK (AP)—Countries in the Asia-Pacific region need to drastically increase their investments in disaster warning systems and other tools to counter rising risks from climate change, a United Nations report said Tuesday.

The report by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, or ESCAP, says nearly $145 billion is needed to set up systems to minimize deaths and damage from floods, earthquakes, drought and other disasters.

Artificial intelligence, satellites, remote sensing and other technologies would help with forecasting, notifying the public during emergencies and providing other services, but telecommunications systems must be fortified to ensure that vulnerable communities get the information, the report states.

Most countries have failed to spend even 10% of what is needed, according to the commission's review, which was released to mark the U.N.'s Disaster Resilience Week.

The U.N. has set a goal of having every person on Earth covered by early warning systems by 2027, yet half of all countries lack such systems and even fewer have ones that are linked to emergency planning, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, head of the International Telecommunications Union, said in a video message on Twitter.

She noted that countries that have put early warning systems in place, such as India and Bangladesh, which faces severe threats from devastating tropical storms, can save thousands of lives and drastically reduce damage by giving people enough time to escape and potentially salvage their properties.

KIM JU-HYUNG

FILE—Rescuers conduct a search operation along a road submerged by floodwaters leading to an underground tunnel in Cheongju, South Korea, July 16, 2023.

Countries lacking adequate early warning coverage have a disaster mortality rate that is eight times higher than countries that do have such systems in place, the U.N. estimates.

And without such precautions, regional annual losses from disasters are projected to amount to about $1 trillion annually, or 3.1% of regional GDP.

The Asia-Pacific region experienced 140 major natural disasters that killed 7,300 people and affected 62 million in 2022 alone, the ESCAP report said. Losses amounted to $57.3 billion. But far more people are at risk and the number is rising as climate change spurs more floods, droughts, dangerous heat waves and other extreme weather, the report said.

By analyzing data from many sources, including past disasters, social media platforms, sensors and satellite imagery, artificial intelligence can help warn warn communities about potential disasters and also provide information on evacuation routes, safe shelter locations, and other resources, the ESCAP report said.

Aside from warning systems, the report urges countries to do more to mitigate impacts of climate change, such as planting mangroves to control coastal erosion and flooding, restoring natural flood plains and wetlands and diversifying crops to help farmers adjust to changing conditions.

The urgency to find ways to protect people and adapt has grown with the increasing frequency of extreme weather as powerful tropical storms and unprecedented heat waves hit many parts of the world.

The report said China, India and Japan face the biggest potential losses from warming global temperatures in absolute monetary terms. But it is smaller and poorer nations that will see the worst damage to their economies, with the Pacific island nations of Vanuatu, Tonga, Palau and Micronesia among the top five.

Cambodia, Myanmar, Bhutan and Laos are also likely to see large proportionate losses, amounting to 7%-13% of their gross domestic product, the report said.

Water at tip of Florida hits hot tub level, may have set world record for warmest seawater

By SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

The water temperature on the tip of Florida hit hot tub levels, exceeding 100 degrees (37.8 degrees Celsius) two days in a row. And meteorologists say that could potentially be the hottest seawater ever measured, although there are some issues with the reading.

Just 26 miles (40 kilometers) away, scientists saw devastating effects from prolonged hot water surrounding Florida—devastating coral bleaching and even some death in what had been one of the Florida Keys' most resilient reefs. Climate change has been setting temperature records across the globe this month.

Weather records for sea water temperature are unofficial, and there are certain conditions in this reading that could disqualify it for a top mark, meteorologists said. But the initial reading on a buoy at Manatee Bay hit 101.1 degrees (38.4 Celsius) Monday evening, according to National Weather Service meteorologist George Rizzuto. On Sunday night the same buoy showed an online reading of 100.2 (37.9 Celsius) degrees.

"It seems plausible," Rizzuto said. "That is a potential record."

While there aren't official water temperature records, a 2020 study listed a 99.7 degree (37.6 Celsius) mark in Kuwait Bay in July 2020 as the world's highest recorded sea surface temperature. Rizzuto said a new record from Florida is plausible because nearby buoys measured in the 98 and 99 (36.7 and 37.2 Celsius) degree range.

"This is a hot tub. I like my hot tub around 100, 101, (37.8, 38.3 Celsius). That's what was recorded yesterday," said Yale Climate Connections meteorologist Jeff Masters. Hot tub maker Jacuzzi recommends water between 100 and 102 degrees (37.8 and 38.9 Celsius).

"We've never seen a record-breaking event like this before," Masters said.

But he and University of Miami tropical meteorologist Brian McNoldy said while the hot temperatures fit with what's happening around Florida, it may not be accepted as a record because the area is shallow, has sea grasses in it and may be influenced by warm land in the nearby Everglades National Park.

Still, McNoldy said, "it's amazing."

The fact that two 100 degree measurements were taken in consecutive days gives credence to the readings, McNoldy said. Water temperatures have been in the upper 90s in the area for more than two weeks.

Life & Style

IN 'BARBIE,' 'OPPENHEIMER' SMASH SUCCESS

Audiences send message to Hollywood: Give us something new

NEW YORK (AP)—In the massive movie weekend of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," there were many winners. Greta Gerwig, who made history for female directors. Christopher Nolan, who set a non-Batman career high. Movie theaters, more crowded than anytime post-pandemic. Lovers of unlikely double features. The color pink. Matchbox Twenty.

But one of the most important triumphs in the moviegoing monsoon of "Barbenheimer" was originality. Here are two movies that are neither sequels nor reboots pushing the box office to highs not seen in years. "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" became a meme because of their worlds-apart differences but they're each indelibly the work of those filmmakers.

"Barbie," based on the Mattel doll, had some extremely well-known intellectual property going for it. And the story of J. Robert Oppenheimer and the atomic bomb comes from no small moment in history. Nolan is himself a brand, too.

But Hollywood's biggest zeitgeist in years was propelled by a pair of movies without a roman numeral, a Jedi or a superhero in sight. At the same time, some of the most dependable franchises in movies, from Marvel to "Fast and the Furious," are no longer leading the pack.

The movie business may be shifting. Audiences are showing a renewed taste for something fresh. "Barbenheimer" could, just maybe, be a turning point.

"I've always joked that if there's a tornado movie that works that the next year there will be three tornado movies. There's an internal prejudice to doing what works," says Richard Gelfond, IMAX chief executive. "I'm hopeful that these movies were original by noted filmmakers will convince studios to lean into that direction rather than doing what's safe.

"The numbers don't lie," added Gelfond.

And the numbers are eye-popping. The total box office in U.S. and Canadian theaters on the weekend was more than $300 million, the fourth highest ever. Warner Bros.' "Barbie" grossed $162 million domestically, the best opening of the year. Universal's "Oppenheimer" took in $82.4 million. Those results, riding critical acclaim and months of a viral double-feature drum beat, nearly doubled expectations and astonished Hollywood.

In the wake of "Barbenheimer," many are hoping Hollywood will draw a lesson other than greenlighting more toy adaptations and the inevitable "Barbie" sequel.

"Everyone came out this weekend for two ORIGINAL, smart, quality movies," wrote Clare Binns, managing director of indie distributor Picturehouse, on Twitter. "It's what audiences want. Reboots, superheroes and films with bloated budgets that often cover a lack of ideas -- time to take stock. No algorithms this weekend."

Lately, some of the movies' biggest franchises have shown signs of wear and tear.

"Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," coming 42 years after "Raiders of the Lost Ark," has failed to ignite in theaters. It's made $335 million worldwide with a budget more than double that of "Barbie," which cost $145 million.

The 10th "Fast and the Furious" movie, "Fast X," was a dud domestically, though international sales have been robust. In three days, "Barbie" already surpassed its total North American haul of $145.9 million.

The seventh "Mission: Impossible" film, "Dead Reckoning Part One," fell shy of expectations before getting blown away by "Barbenheimer." It declined 64% in its second weekend.

Meanwhile, recent Marvel films and DC movies haven't approached the kinds of grosses once assured of comic-book adaptations. Marvel's "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3," with $843 million worldwide, has been a big seller but movies like "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" and "The Flash" have fallen well shy of expectations.

The nostalgia business isn't going anywhere, nor is Hollywood's dependence on remakes and sequels. In last year's top 10 films at the box office, one movie was a reboot ("The Batman") and the rest were sequels.

But such overdependence on more-of-the-same was sure to run out of steam one day—and this year's best performers are coming from some new places.

"The Super Mario Bros. Movie" ($1.3 billion worldwide) isn't anyone's idea of cutting-edge cinema but it reflects Hollywood's new embrace of the giant gaming industry.

WARNER BROS PICTURES/UNIVERSAL PICTURES VIA AP
This combination of images shows promotional art for "Barbie," left, and "Oppenheimer."

Neighbor becomes intruder in couple's lives and home

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend, "Pete," and I have been together four years. During the pandemic, he moved to my hometown, and we live together. Last year, he befriended a man who lives across the street. This neighbor had been a civil-service employee but took early retirement and is undergoing treatment for PTSD.

Originally, I was happy for Pete's new friendship in a new city, but the friendship has turned into a daily bromance. They spend two to six hours in Pete's man cave, drinking, smoking and playing bar games. When I join in, the neighbor interrupts me and railroads the conversation. He insults me and is hypocritical about everything from my appearance to the meals I prepare.

I defend myself to this man, but Pete remains silent despite my pleas for support. (Pete says he "hates confrontation.") An example: When Pete didn't quickly answer his texts or calls, the neighbor would come to our house, peer through our windows, yell and bang on the door. It took Pete six months to tell him to stop doing that. He also eavesdrops on our private conversations, and I will open a door and find him just standing there.

Because of all this, I'm having intimacy issues. I never know when this guy will show up and what he will see or hear. I'm angry at Pete for not doing anything to resolve this. I'm no longer happy in my own home. I think this man feels threatened by me, like he wants Pete all to himself, and I don't know what to do. Please help.

STRESSED IN TEXAS

DEAR STRESSED: Your neighbor doesn't feel threatened by you. You feel threatened by him, and with good reason. He's trying to commandeer your boyfriend, and it's affecting your relationship. The man also appears to be unstable. Normal people do not act the way he does. His fixation on Pete is unhealthy. If your submissive partner cannot recognize that on his own, INSIST on some sessions with a licensed psychotherapist who can explain to him exactly what the two of you are dealing with.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Is it rude to move the front passenger seat in a car if you are only going to be in it for a short time? My fiance and I have been together nine years. I don't own a car, so he takes me everywhere, and I have the passenger seat adjusted perfectly.

When his 17-year-old daughter, who is only in the car once a month or so, gets in his car, the first thing she does is move the passenger seat. We are about the same height and weight, and I see no need for her to do it when she's in the car for only 20 minutes or so.

My fiance refuses to ask her to leave the seat where it is, but I feel she's being disrespectful and that he should say something to her about it. Please help. This is causing a lot of arguments and hurt feelings.

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

AGGRAVATED PASSENGER

DEAR AGGRAVATED: I'll try. If you value the relationship you have with your fiance of NINE YEARS, stop sniping at his daughter and adjust the seat to its original position ONCE A MONTH when you enter the car. This isn't a competition over who he prefers, so stop trying to turn it into one.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

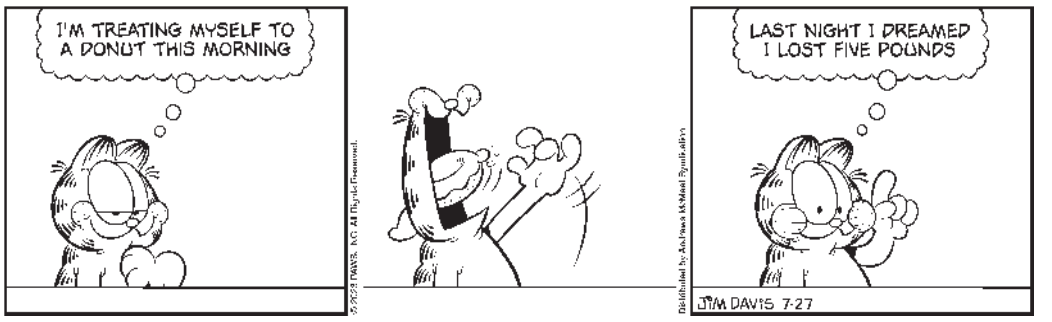
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

ETHEL, I'VE BEEN WORKING FROM HOME A LOT. DID YOU MISS ME?
NO COMMENT.
COME ON, E. I KNOW YOU LIKE ME, DEEP DOWN.
GRUNT.
I KNOW THERE'S A HEART OF GOLD WAY DOWN IN THERE.
SERIOUSLY. SHOULD WE HUG IT OUT?
I HAVE MACE.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

ANOTHER CHARITY LETTER ASKING FOR MONEY. TOO BAD WE CAN'T HELP.
GIVING TO BUILD SCHOOLS IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WOULD BE A GOOD DEED.
WE JUST CAN'T TAKE ON ANOTHER CHARITY. AFTER ALL, WE ALREADY DONATE TO HELP UNDER-TIPPED BARTENDERS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

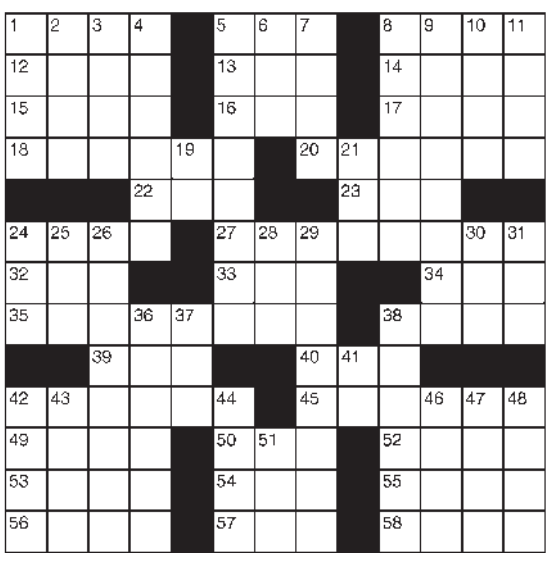
ACROSS
1 Theater production
5 Cry
8 Invitation notation
12 Video-streaming brand
13 Lot vehicle
14 Earth sci.
15 Idle of Monty Python
16 Mouths (Lat.)
17 Zilch
18 Lobster claw
20 Earth
22 Gore and Green
23 British islet
24 Employer
27 Hold as sacred
32 Curved line
33 Moment
34 "Platoon" locale
35 "Ta-ta!"
38 Mellows
39 Entanglement
40 Part of TNT
42 Candle fat
45 Extreme fear
49 Landed
50 "Exodus" hero
52 Cowboy's neckwear
53 Funny Fey
54 Born in France?
55 Alan of "The Aviator"
56 Droops
57 Coifs
58 Hidden valley

DOWN
1 Ready, as for surgery
2 Petty of "Tank Girl"
3 Similar
4 Desert plants
5 "Taxi Driver" director
6 Boat propeller
7 Boast
8 "The Bathers" painter
9 Looking for new talent
10 Skiing champ Lindsey
11 Begged
19 Chicago transport
21 Fan's shout
24 Slugger's need
25 Granada gold
26 Looking angry
28 "The Matrix" hero
29 Types of terriers
30 Dundee denial
31 Ambulance letters
36 River formations
37 Wall St. deal
38 Safety feature in a 13-Across
41 Concerning
42 Makes lace
43 Others (Lat.)
44 Wizard's prop
46 Sandwich bread
47 Shoppe description
48 Reddish horse
51 Classic car

Solution time: 24 mins.

I	A	G	S	■	A	L	F	■	S	P	U	D
O	M	N	I	■	G	E	E	■	I	O	I	A
G	O	A	L	P	O	S	T	■	L	S	A	T
A	S	T	C	R	■	■	A	G	A	T	I	I	A
■	■	■	N	O	D	F	■	M	S	G	■	■
K	F	P	T	■	F	D	N	A	■	R	O	D
I	S	O	■	S	E	D	A	N	■	A	L	A
R	T	S	■	E	M	I	R	■	C	D	E	S
■	■	T	O	N	■	E	C	R	U	■	■	■
A	R	C	A	D	E	■	■	A	T	R	I	A
F	I	A	T	■	B	L	O	G	P	O	S	T
R	A	R	E	■	A	I	R	■	U	N	U	M
O	L	D	S	■	Y	E	S	■	T	A	P	S

Yesterday's answer 7-27



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Taylor Schilling, 39; Jonathan Rhys Meyers, 46; Cassandra Clare, 50; Maya Rudolph, 51.

Happy Birthday: Indecisiveness will stand between you and the success you want. Refuse to let others confuse you or hold you back. Do your due diligence, be resourceful and find a way to make your dreams come true. An emotional situation at home or work needs to be addressed and dealt with before you can move forward with your plans. Dismiss the negatives in your life and replace them with whatever makes you happy. Your numbers are 4, 10, 23, 27, 30, 38, 42.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Attend events that enrich your mind, and answer questions causing confusion or emotional setbacks. Choose to incorporate your skills into pastimes that excite you, and turn what you enjoy doing most into a lucrative endeavor. Make your feelings and intentions clear. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* What you should do and what you want to pursue will cause emotional mayhem. Schedule your day carefully to ensure you take care of responsibilities and have time left over for pleasurable pastimes. A physical challenge will take your mind off your troubles. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Anger and aggressive behavior will stifle your plans. Step back and rethink a relationship if someone does something you don't like. Choose to make your home your haven, not your prison. Positive thoughts will lead to progressive action and personal gratification. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* A creative project will help you rethink your prospects. Don't hesitate to research how you can turn your passion into something tangible. Stop dreaming about what you want to do; start manifesting the life you want to live. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Don't sit in an emotional gridlock. Recognize what is holding you back and what will encourage positive change. Take control and manifest opportunities, and you'll find the happiness you deserve. Rethink your spending habits and ease stress. Be consistent and authentic. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Set your priorities and head for the finish line. Put pressure where necessary and you'll outmaneuver anyone in your way. Don't expect support; you must rely on yourself to avoid setbacks and disappointment. Avoid interference and trust your instincts. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Oversee any job you farm out, or plan to do the work yourself. You may feel lazy, but it isn't worth the frustration if you must redo what you pay someone else to do for you. Choose self-improvement over criticizing others. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You may be on the right track, but don't expect others to feel how you do about the process or outcome. If you take on too much, you'll fall short. Prioritize, and you will keep your goals doable. Protect your reputation. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Refuse to let grandiose plans stunt your ability to see what's possible. Use intelligence and be resourceful, and you'll discover how to use your attributes to make things happen. Don't let what others do sidetrack you. Set your goals to suit your needs. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take a unique approach to life, love and achieving happiness. Build a foundation that encourages growth and satisfies your soul. Don't fear being different or taking the road less traveled. Create opportunities and follow through. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Pick up the pace and finish what you start. Clearing your calendar will put your mind at ease and make room for quality time with the ones you love. Keep your promises, regardless of what others choose to do. Relationships take work and understanding. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Put emotions aside and consider all aspects of a situation. A friend will help you develop a unique plan to position you for a better future. Contribute to something you believe in and the rewards will be exceptional. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are talkative, generous and creative. You are driven and passionate.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5	8	9						
				8			7	4
				2				8
			1				2	
1	7						4	
9		8	4					
8			7			4		
6		1	9	5	2	7		
	3	2				6		5

Difficulty: ★★★ 7/27

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	1	9	5	7	3	2	4	6
7	5	6	4	2	1	3	8	9
2	4	3	6	9	8	1	5	7
9	7	8	1	6	5	4	3	2
5	2	4	8	3	9	6	7	1
6	3	1	2	4	7	5	9	8
1	9	7	3	5	6	8	2	4
4	8	5	7	1	2	9	6	3
3	6	2	9	8	4	7	1	5

Difficulty: ★★★ 7/26

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

POLAR ANIMALS Solution: 6 letters

W	O	L	F	E	V	I	D	R	A	Z	Z	I	L	B
A	E	C	I	T	S	L	O	S	O	R	C	A	A	E
L	R	A	R	C	T	I	C	O	E	R	E	E	H	L
R	U	A	T	U	S	K	T	I	A	S	L	W	W	U
U	T	N	N	H	F	T	C	E	W	A	I	O	R	G
S	A	I	I	T	E	A	B	A	H	N	N	L	A	A
E	R	U	H	R	L	R	V	W	T	S	P	V	N	W
T	E	G	P	G	A	E	K	E	W	A	T	E	R	H
A	P	N	L	L	S	C	R	I	W	E	A	R	S	A
N	M	E	O	R	A	N	N	S	W	L	O	I	E	L
R	E	P	D	B	A	D	O	Z	Q	K	B	N	L	E
E	T	O	P	E	Y	N	I	F	F	U	P	E	B	L
B	G	M	C	S	U	P	O	G	A	L	I	E	B	G
I	U	O	B	I	R	A	C	O	L	D	N	D	U	A
H	A	B	I	T	A	T	D	A	E	H	W	O	B	E

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Antlers, Arctic, Beluga Whale, Blizzard, Boat, Bowhead, Bubbles, Caribou, Cold, Dive, Dog, Dolphin, Eagle, Elk, Glacier, Habitat, Hibernate, Humpback Whale, Lagopus, Narwhal, Ocean, Orca, Otter, Paws, Penguin, Polar Bear, Puffin, Seal, Snow, Solstice, Squid, Temperature, Tusk, Walrus, Water, Waves, Weather, Wet, Windy, Winter, Wolf, Wolverine

Yesterday's Answer: Plantains

The NEW Wonderword Grand Millennium #1 in LARGE PRINT is now available at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, ca. 1-865-232-2367)

Jaylen Brown, Celtics agree to biggest contract in NBA history

BOSTON (AP)—The Boston Celtics have answered their most pressing question of the offseason. Jaylen Brown will be part of the franchise for the foreseeable future.

The Celtics' wing has agreed to terms on a five-year supermax contract extension that will pay him up to $304 million, his agent said Tuesday.

It's the richest contract in NBA history, surpassing the $264 million deal signed by Nuggets center Nikola Jokic last summer.

The deal was first reported by ESPN and confirmed to The Associated Press by Brown's agent, Jason Glushon.

It keeps Brown with the team that drafted him third overall in 2016 and watched him develop into a two-time All-Star.

He averaged career highs of 26.6 points, 6.9 rebounds and 3.5 assists last season. But those numbers went down in the playoffs, when the Celtics lost to the Miami Heat in the Eastern Conference finals. In Game 7, Brown had 19 points on 8-of-23 shooting, making just one of nine 3-point attempts.

AP

Boston Celtics' Jaylen Brown (7) dunks the ball against the Golden State Warriors during the second quarter of Game 3 of basketball's NBA Finals, Wednesday, June 8, 2022, in Boston

Still, the totality of his time in Boston has made him a key piece of the franchise's current core that management wasn't willing to risk seeing depart when his current four-year deal expires after next season.

By virtue of making the All-NBA second team — Brown's first such honor in his career — he was eligible for the supermax extension.

From the moment this past season ended, Celtics president of basketball operations Brad Stevens has been adamant that he wanted to see Brown sign a long-term deal.

"He's a big part of us. We believe in him and I'm thankful for him," Stevens said last month. "I'm really thankful that when those guys have success they come back to work. And when they get beat, they own it and they come back to work. And so I know that's what they're about. And that's hard to find."

Those sentiments were echoed by All-Star Jayson Tatum, who has paired with Brown to lead the Celtics' one-two punch in their runs to the NBA Finals in 2021-22 and the conference finals last season.

Following Boston's East finals loss in May, Tatum said retaining Brown long-term was "extremely important."

"He's one of the best players in this league," Tatum said. "He plays both ends of the ball and still is relatively young. And he's accomplished a lot so far in his career. So, I think it's extremely important."

Brown's new contract likely will lead to some financial maneuvering down the road with the league's new collective bargaining agreement bringing more limitations on how teams construct their rosters and additional luxury tax penalties.

Tatum is still playing under his rookie extension that kicked in last season and will be eligible for his potential supermax extension next summer.

NBA BRIEFS

Timberwolves' Kyle Anderson set to play for China in FIBA World Cup

BEIJING (AP)—Minnesota Timberwolves sixth man Kyle Anderson will play for China in the FIBA Basketball World Cup starting next month. Anderson and the Chinese Basketball Association on Monday announced Anderson's addition to the roster. Anderson's maternal great grandfather was Chinese, making Anderson eligible to play for China as a naturalized citizen. "Hello, fans in China, this is Li Kai'er. I'm so happy to announce I will be representing China in the World Cup. Really proud and honored to wear the Team China jersey," Anderson said, using his Chinese name, in a video posted on his Weibo account. China had 18 players in its training camp last month, but coach Aleksandar Djordjevic said at the time that he could add players. Anderson averaged 9.4 points, 5.3 rebounds and 4.9 assists per game in his first season with the Timberwolves. He was a first-round NBA draft pick in 2014 after playing two seasons at UCLA. China begins World Cup group play with a game against Serbia in the Philippines on Aug. 26.

.2-year-old grandson of Bucks coach Adrian Griffin dies in Illinois

URBANA, Ill. (AP)—The 2-year-old grandson of Milwaukee Bucks coach Adrian Griffin died Saturday after the child's father found him unresponsive earlier in the day. Jayce D. Griffin of Urbana, Illinois, was pronounced dead Saturday at 10:40 a.m. at the Carle Foundation Hospital, according to Champaign County coroner Duane Northrup. The coroner's office said preliminary reports from an autopsy conducted Monday showed no evidence of trauma or foul play. "At this time, the death of Jayce Griffin appears to be from natural causes pending additional testing and final autopsy results," Northrup said in a statement. Northrup said the death is under investigation by the Champaign police department and the Champaign County coroner's office. Additional information won't be released until the completion of the investigation. "My grandson Jayce was very special to me and my family, and his passing is an agonizing tragedy that will be felt forever," Adrian Griffin said in a statement released by the Bucks. "I appreciate your respecting our family's grief and privacy at this time."

Bronny James in stable condition after cardiac arrest at USC basketball practice

By GREG BEACHAM
AP SPORTS WRITER

Bronny James, the oldest son of NBA superstar LeBron James, was hospitalized in stable condition on Tuesday, a day after going into cardiac arrest while participating in a practice at the University of Southern California, a family spokesman said.

The spokesman said medical staff treated the 18-year-old James on site at USC's Galen Center after he went into cardiac arrest on Monday morning. He was transported to a hospital, where he was in stable condition Tuesday after leaving the intensive care unit.

"We ask for respect and privacy for the James family and we will update media when there is more information," the spokesman said. "LeBron and (his wife) Savannah wish to publicly send their deepest thanks and appreciation to the USC medical and athletic staff for their incredible work and dedication to the safety of their athletes."

USC spokesman Jeremy Pepper declined a request from The Associated Press for comment or additional details, citing student privacy concerns. The AP also left a message seeking comment from the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

A representative for USC outside the Galen Center on Tuesday said the school would not have a briefing or issue a statement about James' health scare.

Bronny James announced in May that he would play college basketball for the Trojans, whose campus is less than two miles from the downtown arena of his father's Los Angeles Lakers. USC's basketball team is holding offseason practices in preparation for a two-week European tour next month.

His father is the leading scorer in NBA history and a four-time champion, but Bronny James is an elite talent in his own right, establishing himself as one of the nation's top point guard recruits before he chose the Trojans late in the commitment cycle.

Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin, who suffered cardiac arrest during an NFL game last season, tweeted his support: "Prayers to Bronny & The James Family as well (prayer emoji) here for you guys just like you have been for me my entire process."

Sports figures across the world also sent messages of support. Jayson Tatum, Trae Young and Donovan Mitchell were among many NBA stars tweeting prayers for James, while former Lakers forward Metta Sandiford-Artest wrote: "Prayers for Bronny. What a great kid. Come back stronger young fella. Get better and feel better."

Bronny James was stricken just over a year after USC freshman 7-footer Vincent Iwuchukwu collapsed during a practice. Iwuchukwu not only survived but returned to play for the Trojans in the second half of the season.

Dr. Sameer Amin, a cardiologist and the chief medical officer at L.A. Care Health Plan, is not treating Bronny James, but he says the teenager's move out of intensive care is encouraging.

"It's a really positive sign that they didn't sustain too much brain damage or any brain damage, or any major heart damage in the setting of their heart stopping," Amin said. "Usually we see that when somebody's heart gets restarted very quickly after it stops. Also, in young people, you tend to get these bouncebacks a lot faster. It's a really positive outcome that he's already out of the ICU."

Amin said it's too soon to speculate on whether Bronny James can return to basketball, or how quickly it could happen.

"If (the cardiac event) is happening because of a unusual blow to the chest like in the Damar Hamlin case, oftentimes those people can have a positive outcome because it's a rare and unusual event that led to the heart stopping," Amin said. "In those where there's an underlying genetic problem or an underlying electrical issue, it can be a little bit more tricky to get somebody back on the playing field."

With his family fame and huge social media following, Bronny James has the top name, image and likeness valuation in sports at $6.3 million, On3.com estimates.

LeBron James has spoken frequently about his desire to play a season in the NBA with Bronny, the first of his three children with his wife. The elder James recently confirmed he will play his 21st NBA season in the fall with the Lakers, his home since 2018.

Bronny's decision to stay close to home was a coup for USC, which is expected to have one of college basketball's most compelling teams next season after making its third straight NCAA Tournament appearance last March.

Bronny, whose name is LeBron James Jr., was one of the top college prospects in the country last season as a star two-way guard at Sierra Canyon School in suburban Chatsworth. His younger brother, 16-year-old Bryce, played at Sierra Canyon last season before transferring to Campbell Hall School in Studio City for the upcoming high school season.

Iwuchukwu, one of the nation's top college basketball prospects a year ago, went into cardiac arrest on July 1, 2022, with athletic trainers using an automated external defibrillator to revive him. Iwuchukwu had a battery-powered pulse generator known as an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator implanted in his chest, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Iwuchukwu made his Trojans debut Jan. 12 and eventually appeared in 14 games, including five starts. He will return this season to USC, which is expected to have a powerhouse team.

Alonso, Verlander lead Mets past the Yankees in Subway Series

NEW YORK (AP)—Pete Alonso homered twice and drove in a season-high five runs, Justin Verlander pitched six shutout innings and the New York Mets beat the New York Yankees 9-3 on Tuesday night in their Subway Series opener.

Jeff McNeil had three RBIs and Francisco Lindor added three hits and three runs for the disappointing Mets (47-53), hoping for a big week that might persuade ownership not to sell at the Aug. 1 trade deadline.

Alonso and Daniel Vogelbach connected back-to-back to begin the sixth against Domingo Germán, who fell to 0-2 in four starts since throwing the 24th perfect game in major league history June 28 at Oakland.

Germán (5-7) struck out nine in six innings at Yankee Stadium but was tagged for three homers and seven hits. McNeil's run-scoring single made it 7-0 in the seventh after a throwing error by rookie shortstop Anthony Volpe.

The 40-year-old Verlander (5-5) was touched for just two hits. He struck out six and issued four walks — three to DJ LeMahieu. The three-time Cy Young Award winner is 5-0 in his last eight regular-season starts versus the Yankees.

Verlander was pulled after 98 pitches, and it took three relievers to get the next four outs. David Robertson entered with the bases loaded in the eighth and got two quick outs, leaving New York ahead 7-3 heading to the ninth.

McNeil's two-run double made it 9-3, and Adam Ottavino closed it out before a sellout crowd of 46,540.

AP

New York Mets' Justin Verlander pitches during the first inning of a baseball game against the New York Yankees, Tuesday, July 25, 2023, in New York.

REDS 4, BREWERS 3

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Andrew Abbott pitched six scoreless innings, Will Benson hit a two-run homer and Cincinnati withstood Milwaukee's frantic ninth-inning comeback attempt.

Cincinnati reduced the Brewers' NL Central lead over the Reds to a half-game. The Brewers and Reds will have their final regular-season meeting Wednesday in the rubber match of the three-game series.

The Brewers trailed 4-0 before nearly coming all the way back in the ninth.

One night after hitting a walk-off single in a 3-2 victory, Christian Yelich ripped a three-run homer off reliever Daniel Duarte with two outs in the ninth. William Contreras greeted Alexis Díaz with an infield single, though he initially was called out before replays showed he had beaten the throw from third baseman Elly De La Cruz. After Tyrone Taylor pinch-ran for Contreras and stole second, a 3-2 pitch from Díaz hit Willy Adames. Díaz finally sealed Cincinnati's victory and his 30th save by retiring Andruw Monasterio on a fly to center.

Abbott (6-2) struck out nine to outduel Corbin Burnes (9-6).

ASTROS 4, RANGERS 3

HOUSTON (AP)—Kyle Tucker and Martín Maldonado homered, rookie starter J.P. France worked seven solid innings and Houston beat Texas.

The Astros (58-44) moved within a game of the AL West-leading Rangers (59-43). The injury-plagued Astros could see the return of stars José Altuve and Yordan Alvarez on Wednesday when they go for a series sweep and the top spot in the division.

Tucker's line-drive homer narrowly cleared the wall in right-center, giving Houston a 3-1 lead in the sixth inning. In the seventh, Maldonado crushed a 93-mph fastball that nearly landed on the train tracks above left-center field, extending the Astros' lead to 4-1.

In the ninth, Astros closer Ryan Pressly allowed a two-run homer to Mitch Garver. That cut Houston's lead to 4-3 before Pressly got Leody Taveras to fly out to the warning track in right field, securing his 24th save.

CUBS 7, WHITE SOX 3

CHICAGO (AP)—Dansby Swanson homered twice and drove in four runs and the Cubs beat the crosstown White Sox for their fourth consecutive victory.

Christopher Morel and Nico Hoerner also connected for the Cubs, and Kyle Hendricks (4-4) pitched four-hit ball into the seventh inning. Swanson and Hoerner each had three hits, and Hoerner had two of the Cubs' five stolen bases.

The Cubs (49-51) won for the sixth time in seven games overall, putting them firmly on the bubble ahead of the Aug. 1 trade deadline.

GURDIANS 5, ROYALS 1

CLEVELAND (AP)—Bo Naylor had his first career two-homer game and drove in three runs to help Cleveland beat Kansas City and hand Royals pitcher Zack Greinke his 16th consecutive road loss.

Naylor hit a 430-foot solo shot to right in the third inning and a 397-foot blast to right-center in the fifth to score Myles Straw for his first home runs at Progressive Field. The 23-year-old rookie catcher entered the game with two home runs.

Greinke (1-11) gave up four runs in five innings and remained winless on the road since Aug. 13, 2021, when he pitched for Houston at Angel Stadium. In 27 subsequent away starts, the 39-year-old right-hander is 0-16 with a 6.43 ERA over 134 1/3 innings.

PHILLIES 4, ORIOLES 3

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Alec Bohm followed Bryson Stott's two-out, tying RBI double to right field in the ninth inning with a winning RBI single, rallying Philadelphia past AL-leading Baltimore.

Yennier Cano (1-2) allowed a one-out single to Bryce Harper — who had tied the game for the Phillies at 2l in the sixth with a solo homer — and got the second out before he gave up Stott's sharp double. J.T. Realmuto reached on an infield single off a chopper to shortstop that Jorge Mateo struggled to get out of his glove and made a late throw, extending the inning.

Bohm singled to left past a drawn-in infield and Phillies fans erupted after the comeback victory.

RED SOX 7, BRAVES 1

BOSTON (AP)—Nick Pivetta pitched five scoreless innings of relief, Masataka Yoshida hit a two-run homer and Boston overcame a triple play to beat Atlanta Braves in a game delayed 1 hour, 40 minutes by rain and lightning.

Yoshida's two-run shot to right in the eighth was his third hit of the night, and eight Boston hitters finished with at least a hit in the Red Sox's third straight win. Rafael Devers had a pair of singles and drove in his 75th run of the season for the Red Sox, who took a 2-1 lead in the bottom of the first and never trailed the major league-leading Braves the rest of the way.

Pivetta (7-5) took over for opener John Schreiber in the second and allowed only three hits in five innings, striking out five. Atlanta was 1 for 8 with runners in scoring position and left 10 on base.

RAYS 4, MARLINS 1

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Tyler Glasnow went seven strong innings, Brandon Lowe homered and Tampa Bay beat Miami to improve to 5-14 in July.

Glasnow (4-3) allowed one run, two hits, two walks and struck out eight. Jason Adam and Pete Fairbanks completed the two-hitter, with Fairbanks working the ninth for his 12th save.

The Marlins have lost nine of 10 overall and 10 straight on the road. Miami is 2-19 against the Rays, dating to May 14, 2019.

Miami's Luis Arraez went 0 for 4 and had his major league-best batting average drop from .379 to .375. Edward Cabrera (5-6) was the loser.

ANGELS 7, TIGERS 6, 10 INNINGS

DETROIT (AP)—Shohei Ohtani had two walks and two runs, Mickey Moniak hit a tiebreaking RBI double in the 10th inning and Los Angeles beat Detroit after blowing a four-run lead in the ninth inning.

Ohtani is potentially in his last week with the Angels. The franchise has to decide whether to risk losing the 29-year-old two-way star in free agency or trade him ahead of the trade deadline next Tuesday.

Angels closer Carlos Estevez (4-1) pitched the ninth in a non-save situation and earned an improbable win after giving up four unearned runs, allowing Detroit to pull into a 6-all tie to extend the game.

DIAMONDBACKS 3, CARDINALS 1

PHOENIX (AP)—Pinch-hitter Corbin Carroll had a two-run triple in a three-run rally in the eighth inning and Arizona beat St. Louis to snap a five-game losing streak.

Trailing 1-0, Arizona tied it in the eighth off JoJo Romero (2-1), who had retired the side in order in the seventh in relief of Steven Matz. Ketel Marte led off with a triple to the gap in left-center and scored when Jake McCarthy punched a single up the middle through St. Louis' drawn-in infield.

Chris Stratton relieved and retired two batters but walked pinch-hitter Dominic Canzone before Carroll, batting for Emmanuel Rivera, drove one to the center-field wall, where Dylan Carlson could not make the play.

NATIONALS 6, ROCKIES 5

WASHINGTON (AP)—Joey Meneses hit a three-run homer in a four-run eighth inning and Washington rallied to beat Colorado.

The game was delayed nearly 90 minutes before the first pitch and stopped for 51 minutes by rain with one out in the top of the seventh.

CJ Abrams led off the eighth with a single against Justin Lawrence (3-4) and stole second. Lane Thomas reached on an error by third baseman Ryan McMahon, and Jeimer Candelario doubled to right center, scoring Abrams. Meneses followed with a homer to left field, his seventh of the season.

Jose A. Ferrer (1-0) pitched 1 2/3 innings and earned his first major league victory, and Kyle Finnegan worked the ninth for his 14th save.

GIANTS 2, ATHLETICS 1

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Wearing Oakland green and gold and Giants orange and black, thousands of fans from both sides of the bay stood together to protest the Athletics' planned move to Las Vegas.

Mike Yastrzemski hit a go-ahead double in the eighth after JJ Bleday tied it on a single in the top half of the inning against Tyler Rogers (4-4). Giants starter Alex Cobb struck out nine over six scoreless innings as the Giants took the Bay Bridge Series opener to snap a six-game losing streak.

The game drew a sellout crowd of 40,014 on a night furious A's fans handed out black "SELL" T-shirts and "Unite The Bay" posters to their San Francisco counterparts to include Giants supporters in their efforts to keep the team from moving to Las Vegas as planned.

MARINERS 9, TWINS 7

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Julio Rodríguez homered twice, including a two-run shot in a four-run eighth to tie it, and Seattle Mariners rallied to beat Minnesota.

After Rodríguez tied it, Eugenio Suárez came through with a two-run double in the ninth off Oliver Ortega (0-1) to put Seattle ahead after the Mariners trailed 4-0 after the first inning.

Cade Marlowe added his first career homer in his fourth major league game for the Mariners. They have won four of six.

Matt Brash (5-3) pitched an inning of relief. Paul Sewald gave up a solo homer to Michael A. Taylor in the ninth but notched his 20th save in 23 chances.

PADRES 5, PIRATES 1

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Manny Machado, Juan Soto and Gary Sánchez homered to help San Diego beat Pittsburgh.

Blake Snell (7-8) limited the Pirates to two hits and one run in six innings. Steven Wilson, Robert Suarez and Josh Hader pitched three innings of one-hit relief.

Machado's 20th homer of the season, a 418-foot shot to left-center off Rich Hill (7-10), tied it at 1 in the second inning.

Pohnpei sweeps Day 2 of basketball friendlies

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

It was all Pohnpei in Day 2 of the 2023 NMI-Pohnpei Goodwill Basketball Games Tuesday night at a jam-packed Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

In a fight to the finish, the U17 Junior Marianas women's team lost against the Pohnpei women's team, 47-56.

Destiny Pangelinan's phenomenal performance gave the U17 women's team a close chance to win, carrying them from a 23-30 deficit toward the end of the third quarter to a 32-36 lead just a few minutes into the fourth.

Pangelinan would take her shots from impossible offensive positions as she was always tightly guarded by two or three defenders—but still made most of her attempts in. Her speed and tenacity on the court, however, became her downfall as she pulled a muscle on her right leg and sat down for most of the fourth quarter.

When she did come came back a while later, she ended up cramping and was taken out of the game for good—not before she racked up a whopping 29 points—making up more than half of the team's overall score of 47. Teammate Yasmeen Younis backed her up pretty well too as she made 15 points.

The Pohnpei women, however, took advantage Pangelinan's absence and pressured the U17 team into rushing their shots when they were not in position to do so, causing Pohnpei to take advantage and steal then make their shots themselves.

Sylvania Seneres-Amor, drastically improved from her single-digit first game last Monday and went into double digits in this game as well—making four of her attempts from 3-point territory and ending with 14 points. She was assisted by Chantel Ekiek's and Esther Edward's 9 markers apiece.

LEIGH GASES

Pohnpei's Latoya Beia Ponapart swerves from NMI U17's defense and drives to the basket during their game in the 2023 NMI-Pohnpei Goodwill Basketball Games Tuesday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The older and more experienced Pohnpei men's team subdued the youngsters of the U17 Junior Marianas men's team, 99-55 in the last game of the night.

It was a massacre from the start as the first five minutes came and went, but the Junior Marianas had yet to reply to 17 consecutive buckets by Pohnpei. The U17 men's team didn't give up though and played with heart, trying their best to keep pace with a much speedier and more aggressive Pohnpei team.

The U17 team managed to sink 14 points in the first quarter and was just behind by 10 points.

Pohnpei showed no mercy, however, and the 11-point lead heading into the third quarter ballooned into a 26-point advantage by the end of it.

The fourth quarter wasn't any easier for the U17 team as Pohnpei, led by consecutive shots made by multiple players, anchored their win. In the end, Pohnpei defeated the U17 team with a 44 point deficit.

U17's Gino Asauo put up a great effort and ended up with the most points in the team with 19, with Lance Lerio the only other player in double digits with 11.

Pohnpei's heavy shooters were Oppa Miingi with 19, Hart Yamada and Michael Mallarme tied with 13 each, and Connor Boylan with 12.

First Game

Pohnpei Women 56 – Seneres-Amor 14, Ekiek 9, Edward 9, Adams 8, Vanessa Helgenber 4, Youngstrom 4, Swingly 4, Joakim 4.

U17 Junior Marianas Women 47 – D. Pangelinan 29, Younis 15, Estella 2, Enriquez 1.

Second Game

Pohnpei Men 99 – Miingi 19, Mallarme 13, Yamada 13, Boylan 12, Ioanis 9, Torres 7, Pluhs 7, Primo 5, Elias 5, Helgenberger 3, Shoniber 2, Damarlane 2, Aguon 2.

U17 Junior Marianas Men 55 – Asauo 19, Lerio 11, Sanchez 5, Mercado Jr. 5, Navarro 5, Tengco 4, Diaz, Camacho 1.

Scoring by periods: 14-24, 31-42, 49-75, 55-99.

SAIPAN-BORN

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Southern Armada.'

Maratita, who went to William S. Reyes Elementary School, Koblerville Elementary School, and Francisco M. Sablan Middle School on Saipan, said he idolizes soccer players Neymar and Reynaldo. Not surprisingly, his favorite teams are Brazil and Real Madrid.

His mother, Arayanee Sablan Maratita, is proud of her son playing in the American Youth Soccer Organization National Games 2023.

"I'm excited for him. Despite my situation, he came and has been helping me. In return, I will support him in his favorite sport," she said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jose Azaiah Maratita poses in Orange County, California where the American Youth Soccer Organization National Games 2023 is taking place.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jose Azaiah Maratita at the airport in Hawaii en route Orange County, California.

SCRAGG

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sponsors Mobil Oil Marianas and Marianas Pacific Distributors Inc.

"They've been a part of this from the very beginning, they're big contributors, and a big reason why we've succeeded the past 39 years," he said.

Scragg also extended his heartfelt gratitude to their fellow boaters and fishermen from Guam, who despite the recent devastation brought about by Typhoon Mawar, still were able to send a delegation of hardcore *peskadots* to Saipan.

As for the winners, as expected the crew of *Botin Saba* took home the grand prize with their 11th-hour 140.2-lb billfish.

The father-and-son pair of captain Paul and James Roberto and deckhand Antonio Muna were $8,900 richer for winning it all—$3,000 for the grand prize plus the $5,900 side bet winnings.

In the total weight category, Guam's *Traveller* beat all comers with 207.5 lbs of meat from the sea that earned captain John Cruz and company $2,000.

Emmanuel and captain Mike James of Guam got a consolation of sorts by topping the billfish category with their 130.2-lb catch.

Islas Marianas of skipper Alex Sablan finished second with their 127.2-lb haul, while rounding out the Top 3 is *Cabo Express* with a billfish weighing 108.7 lbs. The Top 3 took home $2,500, $1,500, and $1,000 in cash respectively

In the yellowfin category, *St. Jude,* of captain Jason Reyes, had their prayers answered after reeling in a 44.6-pounder that was good enough for first place and $1,000. Second and $500 went to *Happy Hooker* at 33.8 lbs and third place and $250 went to *Chang* with a 16-lb fish.

Lady V and captain Chris Pangelinan were victorious in the wahoo category with their 42.9-lb whopping catch that also earned them a cool $1,000. Second place and $500 went to *Here Fishee Fishee* of captain Isidro Sablan and his 16-foot boat, while third place and $250 went to *Eddie* of skipper Eddie Labrador.

For hooking a 22.2-lb fish, the *Navigator* and captain Steven Pangelinan topped the mahi mahi category and took home $1,000 cash, while *Reel Tight* and *Hello Kitty* won second and third and pocketed $500 and $250 cash, respectively.

Last but not the least, the skipjack category was taken by *St. Jude* with their 13.2-pounder. It narrowly beat the 12.9 lbs. of *Ruby Fishing* and *kapitan* Nicholal Wedell, while *Fan Gotte* and skipper Jack Pua got third with a 12.4-lb fish. The Top 3 won $750, $500, and $250, respectively.

JAKEY

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the medley relay!"

As for transitioning to being a coach from being a national swimmer, the former George Fox University varsity said he's learning a lot from CNMI national coach Hiroyuki Kimura.

"The experience in Japan is good. I'm trying my best to learn from coach Hiro while assisting him. I am also trying to form connections with the coaches from Micronesia. It is nice because they still remember me from when I was a swimmer."

When asked if he prefers coaching to swimming, Villacrusis said "I feel like coming as a coach is a lot easier than as a swimmer. There's a lot less pressure."

Aside from Kimura and Villacrusis, Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation vice president John Hirsh comprises the rest of Team NMI in Fukuoka, Japan.

The NMISF would also like to thank the following for helping the swimmers and coaches fund their trip to Japan: The CNMI Legislature, specifically Speaker Edmund S. Villagonez (Ind-Saipan) and Reps. Blas Jonathan T. Attao (Ind-Saipan) Joseph A. Flores (Ind-Saipan), and Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), Saipan Mayor Ramon B. Camacho, Aqua Resort Club, BAB Restaurant, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Dae Jang Kum Restaurant, Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods, Gold's Gym Saipan, Islander Rent-a-Car, Korean House Restaurant, Lohas Massage, Mobil Oil Marianas,Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Pacific Quick Print, Shell Marianas Corp., Saipan World Resort, Zen Corp., Zoom Chicken, Saipan Swim Club parents, Tsunami Saipan parents, and all who supported NMISF's fundraising activities.

Jaylen Brown, Celtics agree to biggest contract in NBA history.

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Saipan-born Maratita playing in soccer nat'l games

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Former Southern Armada FC player Jose Azaiah Maratita, fifth from right, poses with his West Oahu Region 769 teammates while in Orange County, California, site of the American Youth Soccer Organization National Games 2023.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Former Southern Armada FC player Jose Azaiah Maratita is now part of a team from Hawaii competing in the American Youth Soccer Organization National Games 2023 in Orange County, California.

The 13-year-old is part of West Oahu Region 769 after the squad picked him from Team Huli 14UB where he is a standout playing left front striker and attacking midfielder.

"It feels nice to be part of a team playing in the National Games. I feel so grateful to have been offered such an opportunity. I expect to have fun and to do our best as a team in hopes of winning the finals," said the student from Washington Middle School in Honolulu.

Maratita, who relocated to Hawaii in 2021 for his mother's recovery, said learning and playing soccer under the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association has helped him tremendously to grow his soccer game.

"I have been playing soccer since I was in the fourth grade. I was taught all the basic skills. Since then, I have been practicing to get better. My fondest memory of playing soccer on Saipan was being able to play with the juniors national academy."

Asked about what he misses most about his home island, Maratita mentioned several things.

"I miss spending time with my family and friends back home. I miss going to the beach and fishing with my grandpa. I also miss playing with my old team,

See SAIPAN-BORN on Page 19

Jakey tops heat in 50m breaststroke

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

FUKUOKA 2023
WORLD AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Jakey Deleon Guerrero topped his heat in his favorite 50m breaststroke event in the 20th FINA World Championships last Tuesday in Fukuoka, Japan.

The 17-year-old Marianas High School student touched the tile in a time of 33.05 to beat Hilal Hilal of Tanzania and Ibrahim Kamara of Sierra Leone in his heat.

"It was a good experience. I was able to place first in my heat," he told *Saipan Tribune* about his performance in a social media message.

Despite finishing 55th out of 62 competitors in the 50m breaststroke, Deleon Guerrero said it was still mission accomplished as far as he's concerned "because now I get to see where I fair off against the others."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, CNMI national coach Hiroyuki Kimura, Jakey Deleon Guerrero, and assistant coach Christian Villacrusis.

Yesterday, Deleon Guerrero and the rest of Team NMI swimmers—Isaiah Aleksenko, Maria Batallones, and Shoko Litulumar—swam the 4x100 medley.

Like the previous week in Japan, Deleon Guerrero said they're pretty much training when they're not competing, especially in the lead up to the medley event.

"Focusing on dives and practicing our designated strokes during practice," he said.

Assistant coach Christian Villacrusis, meanwhile, gave Deleon Guerrero a pat on the back for swimming his best in the 50m breaststroke.

"Jakey swam great today! It was nice to see his hard work pay off. He finished his second individual event today and is now preparing for the relay races. The swimmers are also doing well with their training. They all look ready to swim fast and we will be seeing more action tomorrow (yesterday) as Shoko swims the 50m backstroke and the whole team does

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Scragg: SFA faced with a big dilemma

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Saipan Fishermen's Association president Tony Scragg speaks during the 39th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament awards banquet last Monday at the Kensington Hotel Saipan.

Saipan Fishermen's Association president Tony Scragg admitted that the group has a big problem during last Monday's awards banquet for last weekend's 39th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament.

"I don't know if you can see the trophy over here, but this trophy is full of all the winners from the past 39 years. This trophy is now completely full. There's no more room. So we have a dilemma—make this the last year or have a new trophy made for the next 40 years," he said.

Scragg then asked the over 300 in attendance during the awards banquet at Kensington Hotel Saipan about what they think—make 2023 the last year SFA hosts the Saipan International Fishing Tournament or order a new trophy? The overwhelming response was the latter.

He also thanked the longtime sporting event's main

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